MEDIÆVAL BYWAYS

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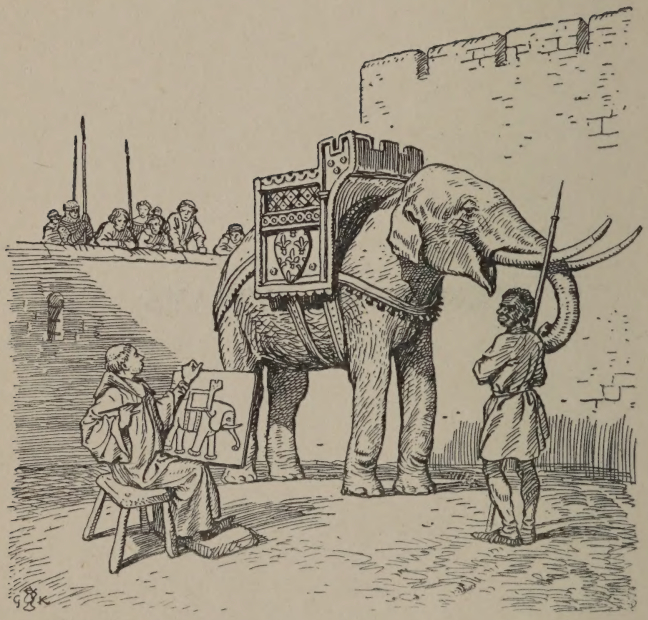

'. . . *sat for its portrait to Matthew Paris.*'

MEDIÆVAL BYWAYS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

'ENGLISH INDUSTRIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES'

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE E. KRUGER

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TO WHOM
SHOULD I DEDICATE
THESE STUDIES OF THE LIGHTER SIDE
OF THE MIDDLE AGES
IF NOT TO
MY WIFE
WHOSE STUDY IT IS TO LIGHTEN
MY OWN MIDDLE AGE?

FOREWORDS

BEING SUNDRY PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF NO IMPORTANCE

ORIGINAL research amongst the legal and other documents preserved in the Public Record Office, and similar depositories of ancient archives is a pursuit which our friends politely assume 'must be very interesting,' chiefly because they cannot believe that any one would undertake so dull an occupation if it were not interesting. And it must be admitted that there are grounds for looking askance at such work. To begin with, the financial results of historical research are usually negligible or even negative, and it is therefore clearly an undesirable, if not positively reprehensible, employment. Then it is perfectly true that the vast majority of these records are

as dry as the dust which accumulates upon them, and that in many cases such interest as they possess is adventitious, being due to their association with some particular person or place whose identity appeals to us. Thus even the most trivial technical details of a suit by William S. against Francis B. for forging his signature would become of absorbing interest if S. stood for Shakespeare and B. for Bacon, but the chances are a hundred to one that S. will stand for Smith and B. for Brown. At the same time the thoroughly unpractical searcher, who allows his attention to be distracted and does not confine himself to the strict object of his search, is constantly rewarded by the discovery of entries, quaint, amusing, or grimly significant, throwing a light upon the lives of men and women whose very names perished out of memory centuries ago. Dim the light may be, but yet it is an illumination not to be got elsewhere, for the writers of History, with a big H, are concerned only with the doings of kings and statesmen, and

other people of importance, while these records tell us something of the life of those who in their day, like most of us, were each the centre of their own microcosm but made no figure in the eyes of the world. It is, I think, not too much to claim that only through intimacy with the nation's records, and I would use the word in the widest sense to include also the records written on the face of our land in stone and timber and even in earthen bank and hedge-row, that some conception can be obtained of the mediæval spirit. That same spirit is so subtle a thing, though one of its leading characteristics is an extraordinary directness and simplicity, that it is more easily understood than explained. But even if it were an easy matter to dissect and analyse the mediæval spirit, ticketing so much as simplicity, such a percentage as humour, so many parts as fear of God, and so many as fear of the Devil, and so forth, it should not be done here. For though this book was written with a purpose, that purpose was not to instruct and edify, but

rather to interest and amuse, which is a far higher mission, and if the reader on laying it down feels that he has acquired knowledge it will probably be due in a large measure to the work of the artist, who has translated into line something more than the material details of the incidents which the writer has strung together.

So far as the half-dozen essays which follow are concerned their origin was almost as spontaneous as Topsy's; like her, they grew. It has been my fortune to spend much time searching ancient documents of every kind, and indeed there is probably hardly a single class of pre-Reformation records preserved between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane into which I have not delved. Being, moreover, of an unmethodical nature it has been my practice, even when hard pressed for time, to allow my eye to be caught by any strange or unusual entry which had nothing to do with the object of my search;—I may admit in passing that I can rarely look up a word in the

New English Dictionary, because there are so many more interesting words on the other pages. In this way my notebooks became full of queer and fascinating little bits of ancientry, many of them clad in that quaint garb of archaic English which lends a piquancy, and occasionally a touch of unintentional humour, to their presentment. Feeling that it was a pity that such treasures should continue in concealment I strung some of them together, amplifying my material with parallel passages from some of the less known Chronicles and other printed sources. The resulting essays were published in the *Oxford and Cambridge Review*, and, I believe, gave a certain amount of pleasure to some of their readers. At any rate I was urged to republish them in book form, which I had all along intended to do, and the editor-proprietor of the *Oxford and Cambridge Review* kindly gave me not only permission but even encouragement. I decided to have the book illustrated, and one or two attempts to procure the services of various

artists having providentially failed I was introduced in a fortunate hour to Mr. George Kruger, whose work it would be superfluous for me to praise.

As to the particular sources from which my tales are drawn, they range wide, but it may interest the curious to know that the proceedings of the Court of Chancery, which at a later date, in *re* Jarndyce and Jarndyce, afforded Dickens material for *Bleak House*, proved the most fruitful class for my purposes. This is due to the fact that in this class of records, more than in any other of equally early date, the vernacular is of common occurrence, and it must be admitted that many incidents which would read but dully in formal Latin or in that atrocious language legal French acquire merit by being told in the vulgar tongue and eccentric orthography of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. From a historical point of view there is one great thing to be said for legal records of this type:—they are completely free from unprejudice. No one expects

a plaintiff or defendant to be impartial. And there is nothing so hopelessly misleading, speaking historically, as impartiality. For one thing the unprejudiced historian is practically bound to be uninteresting; the works of the most judicially impartial historian of the present time—so far as English history goes—are unreadable. Moreover, although he is carefully accurate and painstaking, they give a totally wrong impression so far as they give any at all. A 'History of the Reformation,' were such to be written by him, would be infinitely farther from the truth than one by Froude or Gasquet. To illustrate my meaning from contemporary events: some future historian will undoubtedly write fairly and impartially about Tariff Reform, Women's Suffrage, and National Insurance. He will thereby completely miss the significance of those movements; for the propaganda and personalities of Mr. Lloyd George, Mrs. Pankhurst, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain are not matters for cool and impartial consideration,

and it will only be by the blessed gift of prejudice that the future historian will be able to enter into the feelings of the present generation and obtain the true neo-Georgian atmosphere.

The Chronicles which form the chief of my subsidiary sources are sufficiently full of life and prejudice. Very human were many of those old writers, from that brilliant Welsh proto-journalist Gerald de Barri down to those worthy Londoners Gregory and Fabyan. Best of all are the rhymesters; there is a vigour and a wealth of detail in their work which endears them to me, and I could view the loss of Lydgate's *Siege of Troye* or of the unreadable grandfather of English poetry, Beowulf, with greater equanimity than the loss of such pieces as the account of the Siege of Rouen which John Page wrote

> 'Alle in raffe and not in ryme
> By cause of space he hadde no tyme.'

Few poems can equal this piece in its spirited portrayal of military operations in the fifteenth

century, the two sides to the picture, the pageantry of the army and the sufferings of the non-combatants, being contrasted with remarkable dramatic power in the passage which tells how two pavilions were pitched between the English camp and the walls of the city for the delegates appointed by the rival nations to discuss terms of peace.

'That was a syght of solempnyte,
To beholde eyther other parte,
To se hir pavylyons in hir araye
The pepylle that on the wallys laye,
And oure pepylle that was with owte,
Howe thycke they stode and walkyd abowte.
Also hyt was solas to sene
The herrowdys of armys that went by twyne;
Kyngys, herrowdys and pursefauntys
In cotys of armys suauntys,
The Englysche beeste, the Fraynysche floure,
Of Portynggale castelle and toure;
Othyr in cotys of dyversyte,
As lordys berys in hys degre.
Gayly with golde they were begon,
Ryght as the son for sothe hyt schone.
Thys syght was bothe joye and chere;
Of sorowe and payne the othyr were.
Of pore pepylle there were put owte
And nought as moche as a clowte
But the clothes on there backe

To kepe them from rayne I wotte.
The weder was unto them a payne,
For alle that tyme stode most by rayne.
There men myght se grete pytte,
A chylde of ij yere or iij
Go aboute to begge hyt brede.
Fadyr and modyr bothe were dede.
Undyr sum the watyr stode;
Yet lay they cryyng aftyr foode.
And sum storvyn unto the dethe,
And sum stoppyde of ther brethe,
Sum crokyd in the kneys,
And sum alle so lene as any treys,
And wemmen holden in thir armys
Dede chyldryn in hyr barmys.

. . . .

Thes were the syghtys of dyfferauns,
That one of joye and that other of penaunce,
As helle and hevyn ben partyd a to,
That one of welle and that othyr of wo.'

The whole poem shows a Pre-Raphaelite love of detail combined with a remarkable appreciation of dramatic values, and the same is true of many of the other rhyming chronicles, political poems, and topical ballads. As an example of the value of these poems for interpreting the mediæval spirit I might instance the light thrown on 'the days of chivalry' by the 'Maréchal' poem. In this

glorification of the great Earl of Pembroke the business-like record of the monetary profits resulting from his prowess at tournaments takes the gilt off the gingerbread 'Knight errant' as completely as the details of the wholesale slaughter and subsequent sale of the bag after a fashionable *battue* strip the gilt from the modern 'sportsman.' In view of the eminently quotable character of these rhymes it is really rather remarkable that I should have made so little use of them in any of my essays, covering, as these do, so wide a range of subject. It is also a great pity that they are so much neglected by those whose business it is to teach history. The intelligent use of such materials as these would make history live, but unfortunately there is a widespread idea that dates are the be-all and end-all of history, which delusion is fostered by the importance attached to dates in the ordinary accursed examination. Whereas in reality dates are utterly unimportant and of no value in themselves, but useful solely as *memoriæ technicæ*

for grasping the sequence of events; there being, for instance, no significance whatever—except possibly for astrologers—in the isolated facts that the Black Death occurred in 1349, and that the Peasants' Rising happened in 1381, but very great significance in the fact that the one event was a generation after the other. However, a discussion of the right and wrong methods of teaching history is rather too big a subject to be dragged in at the end of these rambling remarks, which were intended to be an introduction to the essays which follow, so, if any readers have followed the unusual course of starting with the introduction, I will take my leave of them at this point and wish them a pleasant journey through these Mediæval Byways.

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I

WISE MEN—AND OTHERS

THE ALCHEMISTS

THE cyclic tendency so obvious in Nature is not least notable in the domain of knowledge. The discovery of one era is lost in the next, only to reappear at a later day, welcomed as a triumph of modern ingenuity or science. In maps of three centuries ago the Nile is shown rising from great lakes, but in the atlases that our fathers used the lakes have vanished and a range of imaginary mountains lies like a little woolly caterpillar in the heart of Africa as the source of the Nile, only to be replaced once more in our own days by the great lakes.

Dragons, after being commonplaces of ancient time, fell into undeserved contempt, their very existence denied by a sceptical generation, and have only been rescued and rehabilitated in recent years by men of science, who, ashamed to admit that they have found the fabulous monsters of faery, have disguised them in polysyllabic nomenclature of 'saurus.' The 'travellers' tales' of old Herodotus, scoffed at by the superior minds of the unimaginative Victorian era, are daily gaining acceptance; King Chedorlaomer and other worthies, who, after centuries of blameless biblical existence, were conclusively demolished by the High German Critics, have reappeared on contemporary tablets of imperishable clay unkindly disinterred by archæological explorers; and, in more mundane matters, the very latest developments of sanitary science prove to have been anticipated by a trifle of sixty centuries in the palaces of Crete.

So with Alchemy. The transmutation of the base into the noble, above all of the baser

metals into gold, was accepted as feasible from the earliest historic times until the seventeenth century. Then the spread of printing enabled so many votaries of the science to publish their ideas and theories that all belief in Alchemy was swept away by the flood of mystical nonsense, but now science is back on the threshold of the knowledge of transmutation. The old alchemists seem to have based their theories on the belief that all metals, and indeed all matter, contained one common element, of which the purest and most perfect form on this earth was gold. This theory was knocked on the head when scientists discovered the Atomic Theory. Proof positive was adduced that certain substances, such as gold and silver, were elements, and that elements consisted simply and solely of agglomerations of indivisible atoms, each of which possessed the characteristics of its particular element. In other words, Gold was Gold and Silver was Silver, and there was an end to it. But now the indivisible atoms are beginning to fly in

pieces before the skilful and remorseless attack of modern scientists, and it will be no surprising thing if we live to see the 'elements' of our schooldays reduced to combinations of two or three Primary Elements, even if the Primordial Element, the great First Cause, is not weighed, measured, and photographed. If, then, gold and silver can be split into the same constituents it might well be possible to recombine those constituents in such manner that the silver should become gold and the gold silver. To the scientific mind the two transmutations would be of equal value, but to the philosopher aiming ever at perfection, and to the sordid speculator, aiming ever at profit, the production of gold from the baser metal has always been the goal.

We naturally hear little of mediæval alchemists in the legal records. Their proceedings were inoffensive and little calculated to bring them within the jurisdiction of any court, except possibly that of bankruptcy. One of the scarce exceptions of this rule of

silence occurred in 1463, when Edward IV. granted to Sir Henry Grey of Codnor in Derbyshire, authority to labour by the cunning of philosophy for the transmutation of metals, with all things requisite to the same, at his own cost, provided he answer to the King if any profit grow therefrom. The terms of the grant can scarcely be called liberal. Two years later the King decided that Sir Henry had had sufficient time for his experiments and called upon him to render an account of his gains. The philosopher, who had probably very little to account for, did not appear and his case was postponed from term to term for five years. At last a date was fixed for him to appear in court in the middle of October 1470, 'but before that date the Lord King, certain necessary and urgent causes moving him, made a journey from his realm of England to foreign parts, leaving no regent or guardian in the same realm, wherefore the Barons of the Exchequer did not come to hear pleas.' Reading the courtly sentence it is hard to

realise that on the 3rd of October King Edward had, in the words of Speed, 'fled from his host besides Nottingham, passing the Washes towards Lynne, with greater difficulties than was befitting a Prince to adventure, and thus without any order taken for his Realme, in two Hulkes of Holland and one English ship, destitute of all necessary provisions, set sail towards Burgundy, and in the way was encountered by the Easterlings, England's great enemies, having much adoe to clear himself of their surprize.' The politer version of the legal roll has been written over an entry which, although completely erased, we may be sure set out how Henry VI. had recovered the realm from Edward, 'king in fact but not in right.' The alchemy of the pen, by which the roseate Lancastrian version faded to the colourless statement of the Yorkists, was more successful, we may well believe, than was ever the alchemy of Sir Henry Grey.

But in spite of the ill-success of Sir Henry Grey the King in 1476 licensed David Beaupee

and John Merchaunt to practise for four years 'the natural science of the generation of gold and silver from mercury.' Alchemy, indeed, was clearly flourishing in the fifteenth century. In 1468 Richard Carter received authority to practise the art, while under Henry VI. several such licences were granted. Thus in 1444 Edward Cobbe was authorised 'to transmute the imperfect metals from their own kind by the art of Philosophy and to transubstantiate them into gold or silver'; two years later Sir Edmund Trafford and Sir Thomas Ashton were empowered to transmute metals, and in 1446 John Fauceby, John Kirkeby, and John Rayny received the royal permission to search for the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life and to transmute metals. Presumably the need for royal licence in all these cases was based on the royal claim to all mines, and therefore to all other sources, of precious metals. Covetous eyes had been cast upon Alchemy as a possible source of revenue at least as early as 1330, when Thomas Cary was

ordered to bring before King Edward III. John le Rous and Master William de Dalby, who were said to be able to make silver by alchemy, with the instruments and other things needful to their craft. But of all these scientists and philosophers no more is heard, and, although I have not searched the accounts of bullion purchased for the Mint, it may safely be asserted that the revenue profited little by all their science and philosophy.

Alchemy, like so many other branches of knowledge, found a home in the monasteries, and there is a story of an abbot in one of the Western Counties who, at the time of the Dissolution, hid his books and manuscripts of the hermetic art in a wall, and returning thither to fetch them found them not, and for grief at his loss lost also his wits. Thomas Ellis, again, prior of Leighs in Essex, took more loss than gain from dabbling in the art. Rumours of his skill in manipulating metals caused him to be suspected of coining, and he had to give an account of himself. His

interest in the theory of Alchemy, which he had derived from reading books, had been stimulated by 'commynyng with Crawthorne, a goldsmyth in Lumbardstrete, that sayd ther was a prest callyd Sir George that made himselfe cunning in suche matters.' This priest in turn introduced the prior to one Thomas Peter, a clothworker of London, 'that sayd he had the syens of alkemy as well as eny man in Yngland.' The prior took him at his own valuation and promised to pay him £20 for lessons in the art, and gave him 20 nobles in advance. Master Peter then gave his pupil some silver and quicksilver with instructions how to treat them. These metals Prior Ellis sealed hermetically in a glass vessel, which he then placed in an earthen pot full of water, and this he kept hot for some ten weeks or more, employing a young novice of the priory, Edmund Freke, a boy of twelve, to keep up a continual fire. Master Peter came from time to time to see how matters were progressing, and no doubt reported favourably, but after a

while the prior 'perceyved yt was but a falce crafte,' broke the glass vessel, sold the silver for what it would fetch and refused to pay his instructor the remaining 20 marks. Peter,

'A young novice of the priory.'

however, who was better skilled in making money out of men than gold out of silver, threatened an action for debt, and as it chanced that an offer of 20 marks was made at this time to the prior for the lease of a rectory he handed

the money over to Master Peter. 'And thus I never medelyd with hym syne, nor with the crafte nor never wyll, God wyllyng.'

WHITE MAGIC

Before the days of Sherlock Holmes and the scientific pursuit of clues the ways of tracing lost or stolen property were devious and varied. In recent times the aid of St. Anthony of Padua has often been invoked. Why that good Saint should have taken up this branch of detective work I know not; possibly he was confused with his namesake the hermit, whose pig might well have been trained to search for lost articles as less holy pigs to hunt for truffles, or possibly, as was said of the man who married five wives, 'it was his hobby.' However this may be, I have known excellent results obtained by the promise of a candle or the repetition of a *paternoster* in honour of St. Anthony; the prayer is the more popular offering, being cheaper for the petitioner and more certain for the saint—the candle is apt to

be withheld when the property has been recovered, and candles have even been known to go astray and blaze before the altar of the other St. Anthony, who was probably too busy in pre-Reformation days looking after the cattle of his devotees to trouble about lost property. The man, therefore, who would have supernatural assistance in the recovery of his strayed goods had perforce to seek the aid of sorcerers and their familiar but often incompetent spirits. Unfortunately for the modern inquirer no unsolicited testimonials bearing witness to the efficacy of these magicians appear to have survived, and it is only their failures that brought them into unpleasant and enduring prominence.

London was naturally a great centre of these occult detectives, and they seem to have been well patronised. In 1390 when two silver dishes were stolen from the Duke of York's house, application was made to one John Berkyng, a renegade Jew, who performed certain incantations, and as a result accused

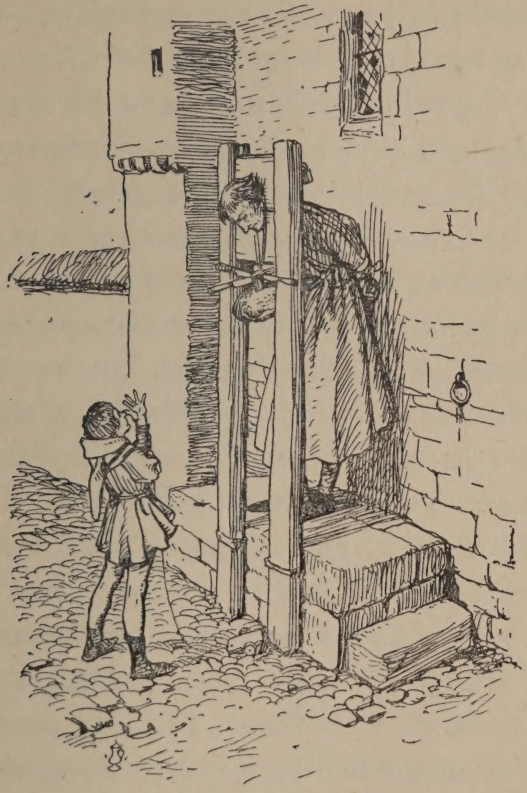
one of the Duke's servants, William Shadewater. In the same way, when Lady Despenser's fur-lined scarlet mantle was stolen, about the same time, Berkyng had no hesitation in denouncing Robert Trysdene and John Geyte. His repute was no doubt considerable, but these two cases proved disastrous; the parties accused had him arrested, and he was found guilty of deceit and defamation, stood in the pillory for an hour, and was then banished from the city.

In this case nothing is said as to the means of divination employed, but in two cases that occurred in London in 1382 particulars are given. When Simon Gardiner lost his mazer bowl he employed a German, Henry Pot by name, to trace it. He made thirty-two balls of white clay, and after appropriate incantations named Nicholas Freman and Cristine, his wife, as the thieves. Here again the mistake brought the magician to the pillory, and the same fate befell Robert Berewold. In this case also it was a mazer

that had been stolen; Maud of Eye was its owner, but a friend of hers, one Alan, a water carrier, who had evidently a high opinion of Robert's power, called him in. Robert then took a loaf and fixed in the top of it a round peg of wood and four knives at the four sides of the same, in the shape of a cross; his further proceedings are vaguely described as 'art magic,' and resulted first in the accusation of Joan Wolsey and eventually in the appearance of Robert Berewold in the pillory with the loaf hanging round his neck.

The connection between mazers and magic is not obvious, but in 1501 when John Richardson, a parish clerk, lost a mazer worth 26s. he at once sought the assistance of Nicholas Hanwode, 'bringing with him divers young children for to behold in a looking-glass.' The record is damaged, but is sufficiently legible to show that the victim was arrested and imprisoned by the mayor and could only invoke the intervention of the Court of Chancery against his accusers. In this last

case we have clearly an instance of divination by the glass, crystal, or similar medium—a pool



Robert Berewold in the pillory.

of ink was used, if I remember right, by the Indians in *The Moonstone.* The loaf and

knives seem vaguely familiar to me as instruments of divination, though I should be puzzled to give the correct ceremonial, but the thirty-two clay balls are more difficult to place, unless possibly they were used for the construction of some kind of geomantic figure.

So far we have been dealing with genuine, if inaccurate, magicians, but a case that occurred in London in 1382 shows that there were impostors even in that learned profession. Mistress Alice Trig having lost her Paris kerchief suspected Alice Byntham of having stolen it, and apparently not without good reason. The two women seem to have been fairly intimate, and Alice Byntham went to a cobbler, William Northamptone, and gave him information of certain very private matters concerning the other Alice. William then went round to Mistress Trig and posed as a wise man, which he may have been, skilled in magic, which he was not, and revealed to her his knowledge of her private affairs. She, being duly impressed, asked him who had

stolen her kerchief, to which he replied, whoever it was it certainly was not Alice Byntham, and launching out rashly into prophecy told his questioner that she would be drowned within a month. The dismal prospect almost terrified her into an early grave, but in the end she survived to see William standing in the pillory.

A case that is recorded in Lincolnshire in the sixteenth century is interesting as showing the more than local reputation enjoyed by some of these cunning men. The church of Holbeach having been robbed, the parishioners consulted their fellow-townsman John Lamkyn, a man known to have 'resonable knowledg in the sciens of gramer,' which he taught to the children of the neighbourhood, and said to have a knowledge not so reasonable of such arts as enchantment, witchcraft, and sorcery. He, at the request of the churchwardens, went off to consult Edmund Nash, a wheeler, famed as 'an expert man in the knowleg of thynges stolen,' who lived at 'Cicestre,' which may

have been either Chichester or Cirencester, as it is called in one place 'Chechestre' and in another 'Circetter,' but was in any case a very long way off. Lamkyn took with him a pair of leather gloves found in the vestry after the robbery, and Nash made certain deductions therefrom, which caused suspicion to fall upon John Partridge, who complained that he had lost friends and reputation and been 'brought into infamy and slander and owte of credenz.' Lamkyn's version of the story made out Nash to be merely a private detective following up clues without recourse to magic, and also hinted that Partridge's reputation was no great loss. There is as little reason to believe one as the other.

Probably the most popular method of ascertaining the whereabouts of lost property and the indentity of the thief was by the use of astrology. Some years ago, when I was in one of those bookshops in which at that time I spent much of my spare time and all of my spare money, I was offered a manuscript

volume, formerly the property of William Lilly, in which that famous but shifty astrologer had recorded some scores of investigations made by him for clients and mostly concerned with the recovery of stolen goods. The figures were neatly drawn up, and the interpretation written below, but, if my memory serves me, there was nothing to show in how many cases the investigations led to any practical result. There are, I believe, two similiar volumes in the Bodleian, but what became of this particular copy I do not know; whether it was due to the unfair incidence of taxation under the budget of that year or to more permanent causes, my funds did not permit of its acquisition, and I left it sorrowfully in company with a much-desired Augsburg Missal and Pine's edition of Horace—the rare edition of the '*post est*' blunder. I did, however, secure Fludd's *Macrocosm*, by aid of which I might myself, if time and my mastery of the movements of the whirling spheres permitted, open a branch of the heavenly Scotland Yard.

The early astrologers, thanks to the cautious vagueness of their statements, seem to have avoided the clutches of the law, into which other magicans fell. The stars reveal no names, recording only, by an anticipation of the Bertillon procedure, the measurements and physical peculiarities of the thieves. If from these particulars the querent jumps to a false conclusion and accuses the wrong man, so much the worse for him—the stars and their interpreters are not to blame. No one said hard words of the London astrologers whom Robert Cooke consulted. Cooke was a carrier from Kendale who came south in 1528 with £30 in money, much of it belonging to other men, in a 'bogett,' and put up at John Balenger's house in St. Ives. During the course of the day he opened his packs, bought and sold and drank with his customers, allowing a number of people in quite a casual way to feel the weight of his 'bogett,' but not opening it. It was late that night before they got to bed at John Balenger's, for 'it was ten

of the clok or they went to soper, for as much as every man pakked up his wares or they sooped,' and when they went up to their rooms

'. . . *sware "gret othes" and took himself by the hair.*'

the house was apparently pretty full, as Cooke shared a bed with John Foster, a draper, and there were others in the same chamber. Next morning, as they were putting their packs on

their horses, Cooke suddenly noticed that one of his packs was fastened with a different kind of knot from that which he used. Thereupon he suddenly exclaimed, 'My pak is wrong knyt, by the passhion of God, sith yesternight,' and opening it took out the precious 'bogett' and found it full of stones. So he sware 'gret othes' and took himself by the hair and altogether carried on mightily, and finally 'made his advow that he would never ete fisshe ne fleissh until he had been at Saint Rynyons in Scotland if he might here of his goodes.' Then, with his bed-companion of the previous night, he rode over to Cambridge 'to make calculacion for the said goodes,' but at that seat of learning 'they coude find noo clerk or other person that wold take on hand to calcle for the said money.' However, when Robert Cooke got to London he had no difficulty in finding astrologers, who expressed the utmost confidence in their ability to 'calcle,' and told him that 'he shulde by the crafte of astronomye, if he wold, have hys eye or arme or other

joynte of hys body thatt hadd robbed hym, att hys pleasure.' This ferocious promise, it may be pointed out, merely meant that the astronomer could give a description of any particular physical traits necessary to indentify the robber. In this particular instance the description was that of a fair man with large eyes, hair neither curly nor straight, and a large nose, of medium height, good looking, with a bright expression, and having one or more black teeth. This elaborate account the astronomer, with becoming modesty, had submitted to the judgment of others more learned and experienced than himself, and they guaranteed its accuracy. It was found to correspond with the appearance of John Balenger the younger, son of Cooke's host, except that the latter 'hath no blak toth in his hed as yt apperith iff ony lust to serch therfor,' and in order to prove this 'the said John Balenger was caused to sytte down and in large wyse to gape and open his jowes to be duely seen . . . and after due serch therin made yt appeared

that the said John had alle his teth whyte and in good maner proporconed.' Adding to this the fact that he was 'callid a good young man and wele ruled, not slaundered neither with dicyng, carding ne other misrule,' and the rather suspicious circumstance that the biggest

'. . . *caused to sytte down and in large wyse to gape.*'

stone found in Cooke's 'bogett' after the supposed robbery was a piece of ironstone of a kind not found within forty miles of St. Ives but very plentiful in Kendale, it is not surprising that the magistrates should have dismissed the case against the younger John Balenger. After all, a black tooth is like a finger-tip print—damning evidence if present but power-

ful for acquittal if absent, and who is a Justice of the Peace that he should contradict Jupiter?

BLACK MAGIC

Considering how large a part magic and the supernatural played in the life of the people in the Middle Ages it is curious that there should be so few references thereto in the English judicial records prior to the Reformation. The ancient chroniclers and historians enlivened many a dull page with the most astonishing tales of sin and mystery, vouched for on the testimony of their own eyes or of unimpeachable witnesses, but the chains of legal evidence are as powerless to bind these legendary sorcerers as were the triple chains of iron to bind the famous Witch of Berkeley. With the exception of general vague accusations of witchcraft levelled against the Lollards and kindred heretics, references to magic are casual and rare in the records of our courts.

With the reign of Elizabeth this ceases to be true, and from the middle of the sixteenth

century to the end of the seventeenth the Black Arts attracted their full share of judicial and magisterial attention. Probably twenty instances of legal proceedings taken in connection with these 'ungodly practices' could be produced after the Reformation for every one prior to that date, and while this is in part due to the fact that local records of the later periods have survived in far greater number than their predecessors, there is a possibility that *post hoc* is in the case also *propter hoc*. It is arguable that the Reformation having abolished, for all practical purposes, belief in the miracles of God and His saints, the natural craving of the unscientific man for a supernatural explanation of the abnormal could only be satisfied by a belief in the miracles of the Devil and his sinners. Be that as it may, the fact remains that after the Reformation witches and warlocks became as common as holy nuns and anchorities had once been—the marvels reported of the one class are about as unsatisfactory from a scientific point of view as those

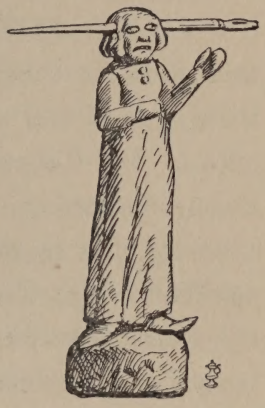
of the other. It is, however, with a few chance references of earlier date that I am concerned.

Suitably enough it is from the land of 'Cunning Murrell' that my earliest instance comes. The Sheriff of Essex in 1169 made a note of having expended 5*s.* 3*d.* on 'a woman accused of sorcery.' The record is brief and unsatisfactory, telling neither the details of the offence, the method of trial, nor the result. These two last items we get in another case which occurred in Norfolk in 1208, when Agnes, wife of Odo the merchant, appealed a certain Galiena for sorcery, and Galiena successfully cleared herself by the ordeal of the hot iron. For a century after this any magical offenders who may have been brought to trial have eluded my search. Then in 1308 began the proceedings against the Knights Templars, based very largely on accusations of practising Black Magic. In England, however, nothing of the kind was even held to have been proved against the knights, although not only 'what the sailor

said' was considered to be evidence, but also what the clerk thought the priest said the soldier heard the sailor say.

It is rather remarkable that the year 1324, in which the great Irish trial of the Lady Alice Kyteler took place, was the date of the fullest and in many ways the most interesting of the early English trials for sorcery. In that year Robert Marshall of Leicester, under arrest for a variety of offences, endeavoured to save his own neck by turning King's evidence and accusing his former master, John Notingham, and a number of Coventry citizens of conspiring to kill the King, the two Despensers, and the Prior and two other officials of Coventry by magical arts. Marshall's tale was to the effect that the accused citizens came to John Notingham, as a man skilled in 'nigromancy,' and bargained with him for the death of the persons named, paying a certain sum down and giving him seven pounds of wax. With the wax Notingham and Marshall made six images of the proposed victims and a seventh of Richard

de Sowe, the *corpus vile* selected for experimental purposes. The work was done in secret in an old deserted house not far from Coventry, and when the images were ready the magician bade his assistant thrust a leaden bodkin into the head of that image which represented Richard de Sowe, and next day sent him to the house of the said Richard, whom he found raving mad. Master John then removed the bodkin from the head of the image and thrust it into the heart, and within three days Richard died. And at that point Robert Marshall's story comes to a lame and impotent conclusion. Not a word of explanation does he give as to why, when the preliminary experiment had proved so successful, they did not go on with their fell design. The



'. . . *thrust a leaden bodkin into the head of that image.*'

unfortunate 'nigromancer' died in prison before the case had been thrashed out and reported upon by a jury, and the case against the citizens was allowed to fall through. Even if the trial had followed its normal course it is not probable that we should have had more than a plain and enlightening verdict of 'not guilty,' for Robert Marshall was a liar of inventive genius. He accused two men of assisting him in the robbery and murder of a merchant from Chester 'in Erlestrete, Coventry, near the white cellar,' with a profusion of 'corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative,' which proved, as he afterwards admitted, utterly false. One or two other wild accusations also came to nothing, and Robert was duly hanged. But while we cannot say that the procedure he described was actually used in this case, we know it was quite in accord with the orthodox methods of magicians. That the story was believed at the time we may conclude, as the younger Despenser

wrote this year to the Pope complaining that he was threatened by magical and secret dealings. The Pope, with much good sense, recommended him to turn to God with his whole heart and to make a good confession and such satisfaction as should be enjoined upon him; adding that no other remedies were needful.

Passing again over a century we find in 1426 William, Lord Botreaux, complaining that Sir Ralph Botreaux, William Langkelly, and others, 'unmindful of the salvation of their souls and not having God before their eyes,' had procured John Alwode of Trottokeshull, Hugh Bower of Kilmington, chaplain, and John Newport, who were said to practise soothsaying, necromancy, and art magic, 'to weaken, subtly consume, and destroy by the said arts,' the complainant's body. Commissioners were appointed to inquire into the matter, but any further proceedings that there may have been have vanished, or at best are lying hid in some unsuspected corner of the Record Office.

Another instance of the use of magical ceremonies with evil intent is alluded to fifty years later, when John Knight, chaplain, complained that he had been arrested and committed to the Marshalsea for going with the servants of 'the Lord Straunge' to search the house of Alice, wife of John Huntley, 'which of long tyme hath used and exercised the feetes of wychecraft and sorcery,' in Southwark. They went into 'an house called the lasour loke in Suthwerk in Kenstrete' (a hospital founded originally for lepers, but by this time used more as an almshouse or infirmary) 'and there found dyvers mamettes for wychecraft and enchauntements with other stuff beryed and deeply hydd under the erthe.' The circumstances are very similar to those related in the case of an old woman turned out of the almshouses at Rye in 1560 for using magical ceremonies, including the burial of pieces of raw beef, to the intent that as the beef decayed away so might the bodies of her enemies, though it is possible that in the case of Alice Huntley the

objects had only been buried for secrecy. Five-and-twenty years later, in 1502, a still clearer case of the use of 'mamettes' or images occurred in Wales. The bishop of St. Davids, having vainly remonstrated with Thomas Wyriott and Tanglost William for living 'in advoutre,' imprisoned the woman Tanglost and afterwards banished her from the diocese. She went to Bristol, and hired one Margaret Hackett, 'which was practized in wychecraft,' to destroy the bishop. Tanglost and Margaret then went back to Wyriott's house, and in a room called, most unsuitably, Paradise Chamber, made two images of wax, and then, possibly thinking that a bishop would take more bewitchment than an ordinary mortal, sent for another woman, 'which they thought cowde and hadde more cunning and experiens than they,' and she made a third image. The bishop was not a penny the worse for this 'inordinat delying,' but ordered the arrest of Tanglost for heresy; Wyriott intervened by getting her imprisoned through a trumped-up

action for debt, in order to keep her out of the bishop's clutches, and the bishop had to invoke the assistance of the Court of Chancery.

Three cases of magic occurred in 1432. On May 7 of that year an order was issued for the arrest of Thomas Northfelde, D.D., a Dominican friar of Worcester, and the seizure of all his books treating of sorcery or wickedness, and two days later Brother John Ashwell of the Crutched Friars, London, John Virley, priest, and Margery Jourdemain, who had been imprisoned at Windsor for sorcery, were released. In these cases it is very likely that the sorcery consisted in an uncanny and suspicious addiction to unusual branches of learning, combined possibly with experiments in chemistry or heretical tendencies, both alike dangerous in the eyes of the orthodox, but the third case was clearly a matter of bewitchment —in the opinion of the victim. The facts are quite simple. John Duram of York had a field with a pond in it, and having in some way incurred the enmity of Thomas Mell, a farmer,

the latter, 'per divers artes erroneous et countre la foy catholice cest assavoir sorcery,' withdrew the water from John's pond, to the great injury of his cattle, besides certain other unnamed injuries wrought by his 'malveys ymaginacion et sotell labour.' Mell being under the patronage of men of influence because of his magical abilities, Duran did not dare to bring an action against him in the ordinary court, and therefore sought the intervention of the Court of Chancery, with what success I do not know.

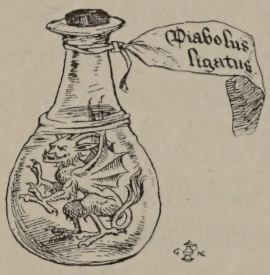
So far my magicians, it must be admitted, have been rather commonplace people, proceeding on the usual lines of their craft and displaying little originality, but my final instance is, so far as I know, unique. In an eighteenth-century manuscript in my possession, formerly in the Phillipps collection, amongst a mass of extracts from all kinds of records is an entry said to be taken from the court rolls of the manor of Hatfield in Yorkshire. According to this, at a court held in 1336 Robert of

Rotheram brought an action against John de Ithen for breach of contract, alleging that on a certain day, at Thorne, John agreed to sell him for threepence-halfpenny 'the Devil bound with a certain bond' (*Diabolum ligatum in quodam ligamine*), and Robert thereupon gave him 'arles-penny,' or earnest-money (*quoddam obolum earles*), 'by which possession of the said Devil remained with the said Robert, to receive delivery of the said Devil within four days,' but when he came to John the latter refused to hand over the Devil, wherefore Robert claimed 60*s.* damages. John appeared in court and did not deny the contract, but the steward, holding that 'such a plea does not lie between Christians,' 'adjourned the parties to Hell for the hearing of the case,' and amerced both parties.

The first question is, is this a genuine extract from the rolls? The critic who is inclined to think that he smells a rat may be confuted by Camden, according to whom on rats have ever been known in the town of Hatfield. The

extremely solid nature of all the other extracts in my volume is almost a guarantee of good faith so far as the eighteenth century copyist is concerned, and the probability that he took it from the original is strengthened by his having in one place misread *unde* as *vide* and subsequently corrected the error. But allowing that it occurred on the rolls, was it a genuine transaction or was it a facetious invention of the manor clerk? I incline to believe that it was genuine. A man who invented such a case to fill up a blank space on the roll would have been almost certain to have elaborated it further, while, on the other hand, having noted the adjournment of the case to 'another place,' to use parliamentary language, he would not have been likely to add that both parties were fined. Granting that the action was actually brought, we are left in doubt whether Robert was a simple gull with whom John had been amusing himself, or whether the defendant really believed that he could fulfil his contract. Again, what was that contract? Latin, though

admirably clear in many respects, suffers from the absence of the definite article, and it is difficult to be certain whether it was a question of 'the Devil' or 'a devil'; judging by the price, the latter seems more probable, as threepence-halfpenny for the Prince of Darkness seems absurdly little, and I believe that *Diabolus ligatus* was sometimes applied to a divining spirit imprisoned by magic arts in a bottle or crystal. However that may be, it is not probable that a law court has ever before or since been asked to decide the question of proprietary rights in the devil or his imps.



'*Diabolus ligatus.*'

II

HIGHWAYS

SO much is heard of the modern facilities for travelling that one might almost think that before the days of Cook (Thomas of the tickets, not the Polar Mandeville) no Englishman had ever stirred abroad. Yet it is hardly questionable that in mediæval times the proportion of Englishmen who had visited foreign lands was far larger than at the present day. Thanks to military feudalism it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries most of our country gentlemen had seen service in France, taking with them contingents of hired or pressed men from every village in the land. For the more peaceful classes there were the attractions of the pilgrimage, the spiritual advantages outweighing the dangers and hard-

ships of a journey to Rome, and the celebrated shrine of St. James of Compostella drawing thousands every year to Spain. Still earlier the Crusades drew the pious and the martial alike yet farther afield, but of those who journeyed to the East many did not return. At all time a pretty sharp limit was set to the travels of the ordinary man by the seaboard of Palestine, and those who penetrated still deeper into the mysterious East were few. It is therefore interesting to follow Geoffrey of Langley on his embassy to the Tartar Court in 1292 and back to England, piecing together the story of his travels from the prosaic accounts of his paymaster.

Towards the end of the twelfth century the Tartars, a nomadic tribe who inhabited the district between the Caucasus and the Euphrates and professed the Christianity of the Nestorians, came into some prominence in Europe through the fame of their Khan, the celebrated 'Prester John.' He, however, was killed in 1203 by the terrible Genghiz Khan

the Mogul, from Turkestan, whose successors adopted the name and, after one or two generations, the religion of the conquered Tartars. Argon, King or Emperor of the Tartars, accepted Christianity in 1289, and in alliance with the kings of Armenia and Georgia inflicted a severe defeat upon the forces of the Soldan. Later in the same year his ambassadors reached Europe, charged to preach a new crusade for the ejection of the Saracens from Palestine. Strengthened with commendatory letters from the Pope, they visited the English Court. King Edward made them welcome, and wrote to Argon expressing his delight at his proposed attack upon the Sultan of Babylon, and promising to come in person as soon as the Pope would sanction his going to the Holy Land. To cement the alliance he promised to send the king some gerfalcons, for which he had asked. This letter was written in September 1290, and next year the falcons were duly dispatched by the hands of Sir Geoffrey of Langley.

The embassy reached Trebizond about the middle of June 1292, and obtained quarters for themselves and the precious gerfalcons while waiting for a safe-conduct to the Tartar Court. The king's whereabouts were uncertain, and Nicholas de Chartres, Geoffrey's squire, and Conrad, nephew of the ambassador's chief-of-staff, Buskerell, were sent by sea to Samsoun, and thence first to Kaisarieh and then to Sivas, where they waited for the king. At last all was ready; a tent had been made from cotton cloth and scarlet and grey material, bought in Trebizond, a parasol had been purchased for the ambassador, and a horse for him to ride, and also a mule, which cost more than three times as much as the horse. For the first stage of the journey to Tabriz, where they were to see the king, thirty horses were hired, but at Baiburt, which they reached on July 25, the number was reduced, and from Baiburt to Zaratkana only fourteen horses were employed. Beyond the giving of presents to Tartars and others, including a gift of cloth to 'the lady' of

Erz Roum, little is recorded of the journey to Tabriz—the city of baths and iced drinks, as the Spanish ambassadors to Timour Bey found it a century later.

The embassy left Tabriz, carrying with them a leopard as a present from the Tartar king, and on Friday, September 26, reached the busy trading town of Khoi, where Gonzalez de Clavijo on his way to Samarcand in 1406 saw a giraffe, which he deemed, 'to a man who had never seen such an animal before, a wonderful sight.' Sunday night they spent at 'Nosseya,' presumably Nuskar, and Monday at a village 'of the Armenians,' evidently near the Lake of Van, as fish appear for the first time amongst the provisions bought, in addition to the usual bread, cheese, and fruit. At Argish on the Lake of Van boots were bought for three members of the suite, the horses were shod and stores laid in, including wine, meat, ducks, eggs, and salt. After stopping one night at 'Jaccaon,' Melasgird was reached, where they dismissed their mounted escort from Argish

and proceeded under fresh escort through three nameless Saracen villages to Erz Roum, which they reached on Monday, October 6. A two

'A wonderful sight.'

days' halt was made here while they laid in stores and had their clothes washed. The wear and tear of travelling began to be felt; boots had to be bought for the chaplain, John the clerk, Robert, Gerard, another Robert, and

William and Martin the grooms, and a hat and shoes for Willecok. On the Wednesday night, when they stayed at another Saracen village, they were entertained by native minstrels, and the following day they reached Baiburt, where John the scullion's boots gave out. Here they had to lay in stores, as the next two halts were to be 'in the fields,' away from habitations.

At last, on Monday, October 13, they found themselves back at Trebizond, where they rested for a week and invested largely in new shoes, as well as in such heavy and bulky conveniences as pots and pans, plates, dishes, and stools, with which they had had to dispense on their journey. The Saracen porters who had carried the baggage from Tabriz were paid off, a Tartar who had rendered some small service was rewarded with a carpet, and the ambassador's suite received their wages and allowances of linen. At the head of the suite was Andrew Balaban, who received a scarlet robe in addition to his wages, and Martin the latimer, or interpreter; then there were Willecok the

chamberer, John the clerk, Walter the cook, Martin Lombard the larderer, and Michael and Jonot 'of the kitchen'; Chyzerin, Copin, and Tassin the falconers, Jacques and Oliver the grooms, Michael de Suria, Theodoric, Manfred, Gerardin, Robert, and Robekin, and one or two others of whom we learn nothing but their names. Altogether there must have been about twenty or thirty persons who sailed from Trebizond and after a slow voyage reached Constantinople on Sunday, November 9.

At Constantinople, which the accountant by an ingenious error of derivation calls 'Constantinus Nobilis,' the galley lay for a week, possibly delayed by adverse winds. There were compensations for the delay; oysters, hares, mallards, chestnuts, pears, and apples must have been welcome luxuries after the hardships and monotony of the past weeks, and it is possibly more than a coincidence that the doctor had to be called in to attend Richard. Even the leopard fared daintily, three chickens making a pleasant change from

his usual mutton. At last everything was ready, the clothes had been washed, John the clerk's hose had been mended, some Persian cloth had been bought for Richard's tabard, and the parasol had been re-covered, which seems hardly necessary, unless it was to be used as an umbrella; the weather being cold, eighteen sets of wraps (*muffeles*) were bought for the suite, while Sir Geoffrey procured fur-lined robes of vair, gules, and white fox with a hood of 'Alcornyne,' and on Monday, November 17, the galley set sail for Italy.

Otranto was reached on Saturday, November 29, and here the ambassador and part of his suite landed, Richard and Robert going on at once to Brindisi by boat. The galley waited long enough to revictual and to allow of cleaning the leopard's cage, and then went on with the rest of the suite and the heavier luggage to Genoa. On Sunday, the Bishop of Otranto having kindly lent them horses, the ambassador's party started on their journey overland to Genoa, reaching Lecce in time

for dinner and an impromptu entertainment by three minstrels. The first four days of December were spent at Brindisi, whence they went on up the east coast by Villanuova and Mola to Barletta, then turning inland to 'Tres

'An impromptu entertainment by three minstrels.'

Sanctos,' which may have been Trinitapoli, but was chiefly noteworthy for a dinner of chicken, pigeons, and sausages. Next morning, Wednesday, December 10, they lunched at San Lorenzo on their way to Troja, and so, past 'Crevaco' to 'Bonum Albergum,' which,

if it was not Benevento, was not far from that town. Two days more brought them, by Monte Sarchio and Acerra, to Naples, where they remained until Thursday, the 18th. Here they were once more in a land of plenty and could feast on pheasants, partridges, mallards, hares, and pigeons, skilfully seasoned with sage and parsley, garlic, and saffron. Two mules and a dappled grey horse were bought, as well as some glasses and earthenware pots and mugs, and the party set out for Capua, sending their silver plate on ahead by the hands of Manfred Oldebrand. At Capua, on Friday, December 19, Tassin the falconer died, much regretted by his brother falconer, Hanekin, to whom he owed 11*s.* 4*d.*, and offerings were made for the good of his soul.

Five days' march, through Mignano, Ceprano, Anagni, and a place called 'Mulera,' which I cannot identify, brought them to Rome. At Rome they spent Christmas. A doctor was called in to attend one of the grooms, and medicine was obtained for a horse, possibly

without avail, as two horses were bought for thirty florins, from 'the merchants of the Ricardi.' On Sunday, the 28th, the journey was resumed, Isola and Sutri forming the first day's march, Viterbo and Monte Fiascone the second. Acquapendente was reached on Tuesday, and here they spent 18*d.* on 'a small box (*cofinello*) in which to carry eel pies.' Passing San Quirico, Siena was reached on the 1st of January, their road after that leading through San Cossiano, Pistoia, and Buggione, to Lucca. From Lucca they struck across to the coast, through Avenza and Sarzana to Sestri, and so up by Rapallo and Recco to Genoa, which they reached on Sunday, January 11. At Genoa they found their companions, who had come round by sea. A house was hired from Pucino Roncini, the galley was unloaded and paid off, its cost from Trebizond to Genoa being £200, a sum more formidable in appearance than in reality, as the Genoese pound was only about 3*s.* 6*d.* of English money. Tamorace the Tartar was dismissed with the present of a

silver cup, and there remained only the leopard to link them with the East.

At Genoa the series of accounts terminates, but the dispatch of a messenger to the Marquess of Saluzzo suggests that our travellers were going through his territory, by the same road that Henry of Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby and afterwards King of England, followed just a century later on his return from Venice and the East, taking with him, by a coincidence, a leopard. In that case they would have gone inland, past Novi, Asti, and Turin to Chambéry in Savoy, then northwards to Châlons, and by Beaune, Châtillon, and Nogent-sur-Saône to Paris. Thence they would probably have made for Wissant, and so across to Dover, reaching England about the beginning of September, 1293, or rather earlier, after two years of almost continual travelling. Of the wonderful things that they saw, and the yet more wonderful things that they heard—tales of monstrous men, uncanny beasts, and evil spirits—of their adventures, perils of shipwreck, and perils of

robbers, no record has survived ; but something of their slow journeying, the trying desert marches, the vexatious delays of contrary winds, pleasantly varied by the relaxation of a halt in some great city, we have managed to piece together.

Such exceptional voyages as those of Geoffrey of Langley to Tabriz or of Gonzalez de Clavijo to Samarcand are interesting for their rarity ; but a value of another kind attaches to the embassy of Hugh de Vere to the Papal Court in 1298. It was a placid and uneventful journey, and would seem to have been not merely without adventures, but without incidents. Beyond the trifling worries attendant on pack saddles and harness that required constant repairs, the trifling interest derived from varying changes of diet, and the complication of accounts caused by the existence of an entirely fresh monetary standard in each state through which the travellers passed, there was little to record but the list of stages on the journey. As, however, the route

followed was the main road to Rome, along which passed a constant stream of pilgrims, prompted by piety or a wish to see the world—priests seeking benefices for themselves or curses for their neighbours; penitents desiring

Pilgrims.

absolution; appellants with their wallets stuffed with deeds, decrees, and legal precedents, and their appellees carrying the weightier argument of English gold—it is worth while following the embassy and noting the stopping-places. Most of these are identical with those used by Henry of Bolingbroke on his return from

Venice almost a century later, and were, therefore, evidently the usual stages on this road.

Hugh de Vere and his suite, consisting of two knights, two chaplains, a clerk, ten esquires, and some thirty grooms and other attendants, assembled at Paris on Good Friday, April 4, 1298, and next day rode as far as Rozoy, contenting themselves on the journey, as it was a fast day, with fish and fruit. The next day being Easter Sunday they did not start until after dinner, but reached Provins, fifty miles south-east of Paris, in the evening. From Provins of the Roses the cavalcade passed by Pavillon down the valley of the Seine to Bar-sur-Seine, where, Lent being over, they feasted on meat and pies and flauns, a kind of mediæval pancake particularly popular at Easter-time, according to Haliwell. They soon entered Burgundy, and turning south through Montbard followed for some distance the route now taken by the Canal de Bourgogne with its innumerable locks, and after halting a night at 'Flori'—which occurs in Bolingbroke's account

as 'Floreyn,' but would seem to have dwindled out of the maps if not out of existence—reached Beaune; and still doing an average of thirty miles a day came to Lyons, stopping at Tournus and Bellville on the way, on Monday, April 14. After following the valley of the Rhone a few miles farther south, they turned off eastwards near Vienne through St. Georges to Voiron and thence northwards, passing close to the Grande Chartreuse, across the borders of Savoy to Chambéry. So far the currency in use had been 'neir Turneis,' or black money of Tours, 14*d.* of 'petit tournois' being equivalent to one 'gros tournois,' the standard to which all other denominations are reduced in these accounts, a coin worth approximately 3*d.* sterling; but now and all the way through Savoy and Piedmont payments are entered in 'Vieneys,' of which seventeen went to the 'gros tournois.'

Through the mountainous district of Savoy progress was markedly slower, the sixty miles from Chambéry to Susa taking six days. The

road by which they travelled followed the valley of the Arc, as does the modern railway, past Montmélian, la Chambre, and St. Michel; but as the Mont Cenis tunnel had not then been completed the ambassador and his suite had to go farther east to Lansle Bourg, toiling up Mont Cenis to the hospice founded on that storm-swept road by the pious King Louis, first of his name, and then dropping down to Piedmont and the ancient town of Susa, where after the hardships of the day's journey they regaled themselves with 'tartes et flaunes.' Whether it was the climbing or the flauns I do not know, but next day Sir Hugh's palfreman was ill, and another servant had to be put in his place at Avigliano. On Friday, April 25, Turin was reached, and a stay was made here until the following Tuesday, a rest that must have been welcome after three weeks' continuous travelling. Portmanteaux and bags were repaired, clothes washed, and bodies reinvigorated by a more varied choice of food than was possible while travelling; shoulders of mutton,

pigeons, chickens, figs, grapes, and other fruit were bought, and the cook prepared 'charlet,' evidently an ancestress of the aristocratic Charlotte Russe rather than of her plebeian namesake Apple Charlotte, as the constituents were milk and eggs. The journey was resumed on Wednesday, April 30, the route lying eastwards through Chivasso and Moncalvo to an unidentifiable place, 'Basseignanh,' evidently just across the Po in Lombardy, as here the coinage becomes 'emperials,' of which it required twenty to make a 'gros tournois.' Lomello, Pavia, Piacenza, Borgo San Donnino (where for the first time we note a purchase of cheese, for which the district is still famous), Parma, Reggio, and Modena follow in uneventful succession, but instead of continuing along the same line to Bologna, as does the modern traveller, the embassy now turned sharply to the south-west to Sassuolo. In this more countrified district the rate of exchange fell, and the 'gros tournois' was only worth eighteen instead of twenty 'emperials,' but as

a compensation the accountant notes under Frassinoro, the next station on the road through the picturesque valley of the Secchia, that the expenses of four days were small, thanks to the presents of 'la Marcoys.' I am not clear as to the identity of this Marquess; all this part of Italy was a mass of little lordships and semi-independent principalities, but for the most part their lords were Dukes. The Marquess of Carrara seems a reasonable suggestion—if I am right in thinking that there was such a person, and am not confusing him with the Marquess of Carabas, who, from his occurrence in the history of *Puss in Boots*, was presumably a noble of Catalonia. Lucca was reached on the eve of Ascension Day, and the feast itself was spent at Pistoia, where the coinage in use was 'Pisans,' the 'gros tournois' being worth 4*s.* 2*d.* of Pisan money. The same currency continued in use in Florence and Siena, after which 'curteneys' are introduced, the 'gros tournois' being worth 5*s.* of this money, which, however, was only in use for two days, during

which halts were made at Acquapendente and Santa Cristina, a town on the shore of the

'St Piran.'

Lake of Bolsena, which name commemorates that saint's escape from martyrdom by drowning, thanks to the miraculous buoyancy of her

millstone, on which she floated to shore as St. Piran floated on his stone to the delectable duchy of Cornwall. After this the accounts are kept at Viterbo in 'paperins,' 3*s.* 4*d.* of papal money being equivalent to the 'gros tournois,' changing next day, for the last time on the way out, to 'provis,' at 2*s.* 10*d.* Passing Sutri and Isola, Rome was reached on Whit Monday. Here they found Master Thomas of Southwark, who had been sent on ahead to hire lodgings and furniture, and here they spent six weeks.

Pope Boniface having agreed to act as arbiter between the Kings of France and England, Sir Hugh de Vere's mission was accomplished and the embassy left Rome on the afternoon of Thursday, July 9, the Count of Savoy accompanying them as far as Isola, their first halting-place. The route followed as far as Pistoia was the same as that taken on the way out, but by rather shorter stages, as several of the party appear to have been knocked up by the heat. At San Quirico, between Acquapendente

and Siena, hackneys were hired for the invalids and special dishes were prepared for them—eggs, honey, and apples being bought 'to make appilmus,' as well as 'verjus, peresill et autre sause.' Ten miles out of Pistoia, at Buggiano, a halt had to be made and rooms hired for the sick members of the party, who were left here while the others went on to Lucca. Here a fortnight's stay was made, and when the journey was resumed, on August 5, progress was very slow. Possibly in order to get the benefit of the sea air a different route was followed from this point. The halt at Lucca had not restored the strength of the invalids, and the party crept on at about five miles a day, stopping at insignificant villages, such as 'Pont Sent Pere' and 'Valprumaye' between Lucca and Camajore, 'Fregedo' on the coast between Pietrasanta and Sarzana, 'Pamarne' and 'La Matillane' between Sarzana, where a three days' halt was made, and Borghetto. It would seem that there was a particularly bad piece of road after Sestri, as

Sir Hugh and the other sick persons were taken by boat from Sestri to Chiavari, where a whole week was spent. During this halt Wilkoc the clerk was sent into Genoa to fetch a doctor for Sir Hugh, and at the same time, money having run short, fresh supplies were obtained from some Pistoian merchants resident in the town. Fortunately Genoa was well furnished with both cash and curatives, for not only was it one of the richest ports in Europe, but it shared with its rival, Venice, the fame of producing a 'treacle' which possessed as many healing virtues as any of the quack compounds that now make England hideous to the railway traveller.

After halts at Rapallo, Recco, and Nervi, Genoa was reached on September 4. Here they rested for two weeks, and as the treacle had apparently proved ineffectual, even when supplemented with 'surupes, leitwaires, especeries, emplastres et totes manieres de medicines,' seven members of the party who were still ill were sent by sea to Savona.

Their comrades who came by land having joined them, they left the coast and turned north through Cortemiglia, 'Castillol,' which I suppose is Castagnole, Villanova, and Rivoli, ten miles west of Turin, to Susa. Here two days were spent and 'Monsieur Johan Carbonel and Jak le Gigneur' dined with them, but who these guests were I do not know. From Susa to Chambéry the route followed was that by which the embassy had travelled on their way out, but from Chambéry they took a more easterly road through Belley, St. Rambert, and Bourg, rejoining the former route at Tournus. From 'Petit Paris,' somewhere between Nogent-sur-Seine and Tournan, four men were sent on ahead to secure accommodation. Only one night was spent in Paris, and our travellers pressed on northwards through Hodancourt, Etrépagny, Oisemont, and Neufchâtel by Boulogne to Wissant, which they reached on the last day of October, and whence they crossed to England a week later, regaling themselves in the meanwhile with whelks

'. . . crossed to England.'

and mustard — not necessarily eaten together.

Sir Hugh and his company had thus been out of England eight months, the journey to Rome occupying some seven weeks, but the return trip covering four months. If we have no hint of any adventures and few details of anything but food, it only shows that the roads were safe and the travellers good Englishmen.

III

CORONATIONS

AT the present time[1] the coronation is the Rome towards which all roads lead; and if a walk down Oxford Street lands us among 'coronation' cuffs and collars and soaps and souvenirs it is only to be expected that a Mediæval Byway should bring us into the subject of coronations. For of all the survivals with which we are surrounded in this conservative country the coronation ceremonies, though shorn of much of their grandeur and significance during the last hundred years, are still the most unchanged in spirit and in detail. For one thing, they restore to London for a brief period the predominant feature of mediæval life —colour. For a few days, in 1911 as in 1236, the city is 'adorned with silkes, banners,

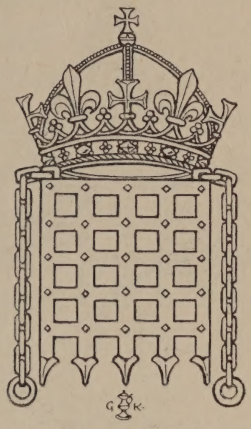
[1] June 1911.

crownes, pals, tapers, lampes, and with certaine wonders of wit and strange showes'; and, though the colour-scheme is baulked of fulness by the sad clothes of the spectators, there is a blaze of gaiety which is pleasing in its appeal to primitive instincts and its disregard of business and utilitarianism.

The proceedings in connection with the coronation of our mediæval kings began at the Tower. Very significant was it that before taking formal possession of his throne the king took practical possession of the fortress. But if his claim to the crown rested partly on force and the strong hand, it rested also upon the elective will of the people, and accordingly, on the day before the coronation the king rode from the Tower to Westminster Palace to show himself to his subjects that they might see what sort of man it was whom they were choosing for king. Naturally the processional ride was made as magnificent and impressive as possible. With the king went a crowd of nobles, all on horseback, conspicuous amongst

them being the recipients of 'coronation honours,' the new-made Knights of the Bath, usually thirty or forty in number, upon whom the honour of knighthood had been bestowed, with the accompaniment of scarlet-furred robes and other gifts of apparel, the previous day. Richard III., whose cavalcade eclipsed the splendour of his predecessors, was accompanied by three dukes, nine earls, and a hundred knights and lords, all gorgeously attired, 'whereof the Duke of Buckingham so farre exceeded, that the caparison of his horse was so charged with embroydered worke of gold, as it was borne up from the ground by certaine his footmen thereto appointed.' Nor did Henry VII., though careful and even parsimonious in most matters, spare expense over his procession. He himself was arrayed in rich cloth of gold of a purple ground, of which ten yards were bought from Jerome Friscobaldi at the prodigious price of £8 the yard; the 'trappour,' or caparison, of his charger was made of crimson damask cloth of gold, costing

£80, and either this or another trappour was adorned with 102 silver-gilt 'portculiez' (Henry's badge, so often repeated upon the walls of his chapel at the Abbey) made by 'Hanche Doucheman.' Over the king's head was a canopy of cloth of gold, the gilded staves of which were carried by relays of knights, changed at frequent intervals that many might partake of the honourable but arduous duty, and in attendance on him were the 'henxmen,' dressed in crimson satin (costing 16*s.* the yard) and white cloth of gold embroidered with the royal arms from designs by Christian Poynter, who also executed twelve 'cotes of armes for herauldes, beten and wrought in oyle colours with fyne gold,' and twelve similar trumpet banners. The henchmen led the spare charger which



'*Henry's badge.*'

for some reason always formed part of the royal procession. It was, possibly, for this state charger that the 'trappours of St. George' were made, of white cloth of gold, but the 'trappour of blue velvet with 102 red roses worked with Venice gold and dragons of red velvet,' and the other 'trappour' with the arms of Cadwallader, clearly belonged to the queen's portion of the procession. She was clad in white damask cloth of gold, reclining on cushions of the same material in a litter drawn by two horses with white harness and trappings, under a canopy of white damask with silver staves. Five henchmen in crimson and blue led her palfrey of estate; then came three 'cheires,' or carriages, each containing four ladies and draped in crimson, and then seven ladies in

A 'herauld.'

blue velvet 'purfelled' with crimson satin, riding on palfreys all of one colour with harness of crimson cloth of gold, her suite displaying a splendour of colour which formed an excellent foil to her own silvery radiance.

Our sovereigns no longer start from a fortress to ascend the throne, and they show themselves to their loyal subjects after they have been crowned instead of before the ceremony, not from any fear that they may prove unacceptable to the people, but because none would dream of challenging their right. But if Buckingham Palace is a less satisfactory starting-point than the Tower (and there are artists who consider the latter the more picturesque), there are some things in which we have improved upon our ancestors. Chief amongst these are the police arrangements. It is no longer necessary to proclaim, as was done when Edward II. was crowned, 'That no one shall dare to carry sword, or pointed knife, or dagger, mace, or club, or other arms on pain of imprisonment for a year and a day'—the only weapon

of offence thus sternly prohibited now-a-days being the aeroplane. Nor is the threat of a similar penalty needed to ensure the polite treatment of foreigners attending the coronation. A certain amount of severity was no doubt required to counteract the effects of nine conduits in the Cheap running red and white wine, with auxiliary fountains at Westminster, however weak the wine may have been. Modern coronations are not 'hanseld and auspicated,' as was that of Richard I., with the blood of many Jews, because some of their number had dared sacrilegiously to gaze upon the king—a privilege notoriously accorded to cats, but evidently forbidden to a dog of a Jew. On the other hand, we are spared such disastrous overcrowding as occurred at the coronation of Edward II., when the king had to go out of his palace by the back door to avoid the crush, and by the pressure of the crowd within the Abbey a stout earthen wall was broken down, a prominent citizen 'threstyd to deth,' and the area reserved for the ceremony invaded.

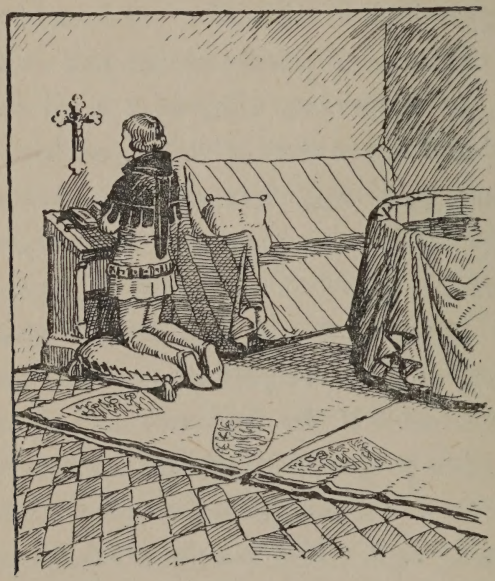
It would seem from the instance just quoted that the temporary erections made by our ancestors on these occasions would not have passed the L.C.C. tests, and we may also flatter ourselves that they would never have been capable of hiding their churches and other public buildings under a sea of ingeniously constructed deal seats, but still the carpenters and upholsterers were kept pretty busy at the Abbey for some little time before the ceremony, though the tradesmen who most benefited were the leading mercers, who had to supply great quantities of cloth of gold, velvet, Turkish and Italian silks, samite, and fine linen of Tripoli. Within the Abbey, at the crossing of the transepts, a high stage had to be erected for the chair of state, where the king sat in full view of the people during the first part of the service. This stage was covered with rugs and hung round with silken cloth of gold, the chair of state being also provided with a golden canopy and silken cushions. Several varieties of cloth of gold were used,

the bill for this material at the coronation of Edward III., in 1327, amounting to £450, much of it being bought from one John de Perers, who might very well have been the father of Alice Perers, that 'busy court-flie' who infatuated the king in his declining years. The most expensive variety was 'silken cloth of gold of Nak,' but what place is meant by Nak I cannot say with any certainty: just conceivably it might be Nasik close to Bombay, for much of this material came from at least as far east as Turkey; but whatever its place of origin, it was used for the king's hose and shoes, and for the little tent or shrine before the high altar within which the ceremony of anointing, with its attendant disrobing, took place. The next most valuable kind is described as *raffata*—presumably 'reeded,' though the word is not to be found in Ducange (when will some one do for mediæval Latin what Oxford and Sir James Murray are doing for modern English?)—was used for covering the archbishop's chair, while of a third variety,

diapered or damask, one whole cloth was offered at the high altar, and two cloths sewed together were used to cover the tomb of the king's grandfather, Edward I. Others of these diaper cloths, with purple velvet and cloth of Tartar, or Armenian, silk, were used in the chancel and round the high altar, while canvas cloth of gold was mixed with the more precious kinds or employed in less important positions.

The king, after his ride to Westminster Palace, partook of a light supper and retired to his chamber. If he had not already been knighted he prepared for that ceremony, a usual though not invariable preliminary to coronation, by keeping vigil. The room in which the young Edward III. rested was provided with red rugs with the royal arms worked in the corners, three 'bankers' or bench covers of a like design, and other 'bankers' of red, green, murrey and blue, and his bath was covered with silken cloth of gold, though for the bath of Henry VII. Flemish linen was considered

good enough. On the morning of the coronation day the king, after the ceremonial bath, put on spotless raiment, to signify that 'as his



'The young Edward III.'

body glistens with the washing and the beauty of his vestments so may his soul shine,' and went into Westminster Hall, where he was lifted by his lords into his throne. Presently the royal procession, the king walking barefoot

and the various nobles carrying the regalia, started down the covered way, carpeted with the coarse burrell cloth of Candlewykstrete (now Cannon Street), so much of this carpet as lay outside the church being the perquisite of the lord of the manor of Bedford as almoner for the day, and were met by the monks and clergy, and by them conducted into the Abbey. With the details of the ceremony that then ensued, 'whereof the circumstaunce to shewe in ordre wolde aske a longe leysoure,' all who are interested must by this time be well acquainted, so often and so fully has it been described.

The ceremonial investiture was performed with the regalia of St. Edward, preserved in the Abbey treasury and regarded as too sacred for lay hands to touch, so that in the procession they were carried set out upon a covered board; but before the close of the service the king laid aside the crown of St. Edward and assumed his royal crown. This did not resemble the glittering monstrosity with which

we now render our sovereigns' heads uncomfortable and slightly absurd, but was a dignified and artistic circlet of the type known to heraldic writers as a ducal coronet. Edward III. had three crowns, all of gold, the chief—described in 1356 as 'lately pawned in Flanders'—with eight fleurs-de-lys of rubies and emeralds with four great orient pearls and eight sprays of balas rubies and orient sapphires; the second, given to Queen Philippa, had ten fleurs-de-lys of rubies and emeralds with groups of emeralds and six pearls; the third was not, strictly speaking, a crown, but a chaplet, being an unflowered circlet with nine groups of great oriental pearls and in the midst a beautiful ruby. Wearing

Crowns ancient and modern.

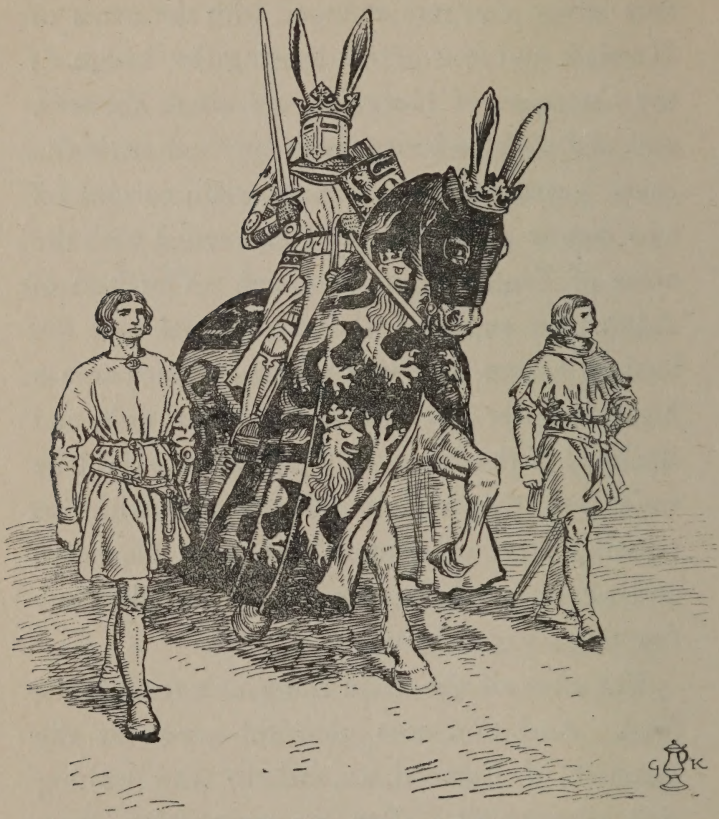
his crown and attended by his nobles bearing the other insignia of royalty, the newly anointed king returned to Westminster Palace for the great business of the coronation banquet. For this event Westminster Hall was prepared, a 'siege royal,' or throne, being set for the king at the upper end, covered with 'Turkish cloth of gold,' or other handsome material, with a canopy. The benches of the lower tables were covered with 'bankers' of red or blue cloth and 'dorsers' of the same material hung behind the guests—the 'dorser' being the mediæval equivalent of the 'thing they call a dodo, running round the wall.' The 'dorsers' behind the royal seat were of cloth of gold and were protected from the dampness of the walls by a lining of canvas. When the guests were seated in their order of precedence, and the Earl Marshal and his attendants had ridden up and down the hall to make room for the attendants, the banquet began, and during its course a number of nobles and lords of manors had the duty or

privilege of discharging various services to the king, receiving as a rule valuable perquisites. Thus the table had been laid by the lord of Kibworth-Beauchamp manor, in return for which service he kept the salt cellar, knives, and spoons; the cloths and napkins had been provided by the lord of Ashley in Essex, as Chief Napier, and remained his property. The important post of Chief Butler was filled by the Earl of Arundel, though at the coronation of Queen Eleanor, in 1236, his place was taken by the Earl of Surrey, as he had been excommunicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a quarrel over sporting rights, but the lord of Wimondley had the privilege of passing the first cup of wine to the king, and then withdrew in favour of the mayor of London, who acted as chief cupbearer—not without reward, for at the coronation feast of Edward III. the mayor received as his fee a gold cup enamelled with the royal arms, and a gold 'water-spout-pot,' or ewer, ornamented with enamel and two Scottish pearls. At the same

feast the Earl of Lancaster as steward secured four silver chargers stamped with the arms of Harclay, and four others bearing the badge of the Countess of Hereford, ten silver skewers, and eight sauce-boats, each marked with the royal leopard, and the chamberlain carried off two basins parcel gilt and enamelled with the arms of England and Scotland. The lord of Addington supplied a dish of gruel and the lord of Liston in Essex wafers; other persons brought water and held basins and towels, and the head of the family of Dymoke of Scrivelsby rode into the hall in full armour, with his punning crest of a moke's ears on his helm, and offered to fight any one who would deny the king's sovereignty.

But after all the main thing at a feast is the food. And that was plentiful—even at the banquet of Edward II., where the waiting was disgraceful. For his coronation feast Edward I. sent out orders to the sheriffs of the different counties to provide 27,800 chickens, 540 oxen, about a thousand pigs and 250

sheep, besides instructing the prelates to send



'*Dymoke of Scrivelsby.*'

up as many swans, peacocks, cranes, rabbits, and kids as possible, and also giving large

orders for salmon, pike, eels, and lampreys. It is not surprising that his cook, Hugh of Malvern, required six oaks and six beeches to be made into tables for the kitchen. This suggests a certain grossness of feeding which a study of the actual menu might dissipate; certainly the banquets of later sovereigns were sufficiently elaborate and varied. When Henry VI. was crowned in 1429, at the early age of nine, he was served with three 'courses.' The first of these included not only boiled beef and mutton, capons, herons, and cygnets, but 'Frument with venyson; viand royall plantyd losynges of golde; Bore hedes in castellys of golde and enarmed; a rede leche with lyons coruyn therin'—in other words, a pink jelly or mould ornamented with lions—and, as a crowning glory, 'Custarde royall with a lyoparde of golde syttynge therein and holdynge a floure de lyce.' The second course, besides chickens, partridges, cranes, peacock 'enhakyll' (with its feathers), and rabbits, contained 'pygge endoryd'—gilded sucking-pig—'a frytour

garnysshed with a leopardes hede and two estryche feders; Gely party wryten and notyd with Te Deum Laudamus,' and, as a masterpiece, 'A whyte leche (or blancmange) plantyd with a rede antelop, a crowne aboute his necke with a chayne of golde; flampayne powderyd with leopardes and flower delyce of golde.' After this the third course, with no creation more wonderful than 'A bake mete lyke a shylde, quarteryd red and whyte, sette with losenges gylte and floures of borage,' falls rather flat. With each course was presented a 'sotyltie,' or elaborate device made, presumably, of sugar and pastry, representing groups of kings and saints. These 'subtleties,' however, were not to be compared to those at the coronation banquet of Katherine of France, queen of Henry v. Her banquet also was of three courses, 'and ye shall understand that this feest was all of fysshe,' and a most astonishing variety of fish there was. Besides all the common fish—salmon, soles, turbot, etc.—there were lampreys, in comparison with

which Henry III. once declared that all other fish were insipid, 'sturgeon with welkes,' a combination of the royal and the plebeian, fried 'menues,' or minnows, the mediæval whitebait, conger, now much neglected, and 'porpies rostyd,' besides a score of other kinds, including certain mysterious 'dedellys in burneux.' The sweets included 'Gely coloured with columbyne floures'; 'flampeyn —a kind of raised pie—flourished with a scochon royall, therein three crownes of golde plantyd with floure delyce and floures of camemyll wrought of confeccyons'; 'A whyte leche flourysshed with hawthorne levys and redde hawys;' and 'A march payne garnysshed with dyverse fygures of aungellys, amonge the whiche was set an ymage of Seynt Katheryne holdynge this rason, *Il est escrit, pur voir et dit, per mariage pur cest guerre ne dure.*' Of the 'sotylties' the first showed a pelican and its young, and an image of St. Katherine (of Alexandria) holding a book in one hand and an inscribed scroll in the other;

the second showed a panther, the Queen's badge, and St. Katherine with her more usual emblem, the wheel. The third and most elaborate was 'a tigre lokyng in a mirrour and a man sittyng on horse backe, clene armyd, holdyng in his armys a tiger whelpe, with this reason (*i.e* .motto), *Par force sanz reson ie ay pryse ceste beste*, and with his one hande makynge a countenaunce of throwynge of mirrours at the great tigre, the whiche helde this reason, *Gile de mirrour ma fete distour*.' The legend of the Tiger and the Mirror has been very fully worked out in connection with the arms of the Kentish family of Sybill by Mr. G. C. Druce, a great authority on unnatural history, but he does not appear to have known this instance of its occurrence. An early bestiary informs us that 'there is a beast which is called Tiger; it is a kind of serpent' (this suggests the zoological classification of *Punch's* railway porter—'Cats is dogs and rabbits is dogs, but a tortoise is a hinsect'). 'This beast is of a nature so courageous and

fierce that no living man dares to approach it. When the beast has young the hunters . . . watch until they see the tiger go off and leave its den and its young; they then seize the cubs and place mirrors in the path just where

'The tiger and the mirror.'

they leave. The character of the tiger is such that however angry it may be it is unable to look in the mirror without its gaze becoming fixed.' (Surely this is more suggestive of Eve than of the serpent?) 'It believes then that it is its cub that it sees in the mirror; it recog-

nises its figure with great satisfaction and believes positively to have found its cub.' (This property of the mirror may explain the puzzling question why so many ladies persist in dressing like their own daughters.) Thus the hunters escape while the tiger stops where it is, and I think that I had better follow the tiger's example.

IV

DEATH AND DOCTORS

TO read a medical dictionary is to marvel that any man should enjoy even brief intervals of health, there are so many delicate organs in the body and so many diseases lying in wait for them. Read the pronouncements of specialists on diet and the dangers which attend the eating of any food or the drinking of any liquid, and the marvel grows. Add the extraordinary facility with which accidents occur, and the margin between life and death becomes surprisingly narrow. The crew of a destroyer are habitually separated from the other world by about a quarter of an inch of steel. With most of us the partition is less obvious, less constant and uniform, but very nearly as thin in places. For any but the most hardened there must always be a feeling of pleased surprise upon

emerging safely on the other side of Piccadilly Circus or the Embankment by Blackfriars. (It is true that in the latter case a paternal, not to say grandmotherly, Council has provided the unexciting alternative of a subway, but only leisurely athletes have the time or energy to descend and reascend those stairs.) The average City man is within inches and seconds of death every day, and it is only when the inches and seconds become fractional that he realises for the moment his insecurity of tenure. Which is just as well. Every age has its own dangers: we have the motor car, unwitting apostle of socialism in its brutal, individualistic disregard for the rights of others; mediæval man, I am inclined to think, ran most risk from the quick temper of his fellows.

From time to time, when some undesirable alien is arrested for stabbing an enemy or chance acquaintance who has annoyed him, the police-court magistrate before whom he is brought will comment, with patriotic pride, on the 'un-English' nature of the offence. And it

is true that at the present time the Englishman as a rule emphasises his disagreement with his opponent by means of fist or hob-nailed boot rather than with a knife, but this was certainly not so in mediæval times. Call a man 'a boor' nowadays and your may get a black eye, but the results were more disastrous in the thirteenth century, as John Marsh found when he applied that opprobrious term to Richard Fraunkfee as they were walking back from church at Doncaster, for Richard promptly knifed him. Every man in those days carried a knife, dagger, anelace, or baselard, and produced it without hesitation if angered. Needless to say, the knife was much in evidence after harvest feasts, wakes, and especially visits to the tavern, for drunkenness has been an English vice since Fitz Stephen, in the twelfth century, spoke of 'the inordinate drinking of fools' as one of the two plagues of London. How far this failing was common to both sexes I do not know; casual references to women in taverns occur occasionally, but they might have

been there as blamelessly as their descendants in a modern tea-shop, and, so far as I can remember, I have only come across one woman who met her death when drunk—a Yorkshire woman who fell down a well. At the same time, seeing that 'the good wyf taugte hir dougter' in the fifteenth century that 'if thou be ofte drunke it falle thee to schame,' it looks as if occasional excess might have been condoned. With the exception of drunkenness, the moving cause of the innumerable murderous assaults is rarely given, and it is rather curious that the only two cases which I have found of men quarrelling, with fatal results, over a woman both occurred at ironworks in Yorkshire in 1266.

Knives were not infrequently responsible for deaths without any evil intent on the part of their owners. In quite a large number of cases when boys were playing together a knife would fall out of its sheath and inflict a mortal wound. And then, if the owner were over twelve, he would have, theoretically, to go to prison and

stay there till he received a formal pardon from the king for accidental manslaughter. I say 'theoretically' because in practice the culprit usually 'fled,' which, I suspect, meant that he went round the corner while the village constable carefully looked in the wrong place for him. An unusual incident connected with a knife occurred in Dorset in 1280, when a girl, clearing the table after dinner, picked up the tablecloth with a knife inside, and as she went out of the room tripped and fell so that the knife stuck into her. It was about the same date that a Suffolk peasant, William le Keu, flung a knife against the wall of his house and it bounded off and killed his infant daughter, lying on her mother's lap in front of the fire. Why he should have thrown his knife at the wall does not appear, but people were always throwing things about and hitting inoffensive passers-by. For instance, a man would fling a rake or a flail at some chicken and hit his own child. Children, in fact, had an unhappy knack of coming round the corner with disastrous

results to themselves, especially when their elders were playing quoits or pennystone

'. . . *got his arms round a branch.*'

down the village street. One of the most curious cases of what we may call an indirect

accident was when two small boys went into an orchard to get apples; one of them threw a stone up into a tree, but instead of bringing

'The broken bough fell on the head of a man standing down below.'

down an apple it hit a stone that some one had thrown up long before, and this fell on his cousin's head and killed him. Another case of the unforeseen happened in Nottinghamshire in the thirteenth century, when Richard Palmer

was climbing a tree in a churchyard to take a crow's nest. He was standing on a bough when suddenly it broke; but the result was not what might have been expected, for Richard got his arms round a branch and after hanging for a long time came down safely, but the broken bough fell on the head of a man standing down below, and 'the dog it was that died.'

Fire, the second of Fitz Stephen's 'plagues,' played its part in preventing over-population, as might be expected when the framework of the huts was of wood, the roof of thatch and the floor covered with straw or rushes. If a woman went to bed leaving a lighted candle stuck on the wall it was hardly surprising if she paid for her carelessness with her life, but as a rule the victims were children or very old people, and as often as not the immediate cause was some chicken, or pig, or calf getting on to the open hearth and scattering the fire on to the straw-covered floor. For the mediæval peasant shared his hut with his live stock, though it would not be often that a man

would be called upon to separate two horses fighting in his kitchen; this did actually happen to a man in Winchester, and as usual the peacemaker got the worst of it. Fire, again, acting indirectly through the medium of water, was another frequent cause of disaster, a most astonishing number of cases occurring of persons, usually children, scalded to death. I can only suppose that the cauldrons were large and insecurely balanced; that they were large may be concluded from the frequency with which people fell into them. But cold water was perhaps as deadly an agent as any. In Yorkshire in particular the coroners' rolls suggest that the number of people that fell off bridges and out of boats into streams and down wells must have seriously interfered with the purity of the water supply; but, fortunately, water was very rarely drunk in those days. The most frequent cause of drowning seems to have been falling off a horse, and the mediæval version of the well-known proverb ought to have been 'One man can ride a horse to the

water, but nine out of ten can't stay on when he drinks.' Taking the number of cases in which men watering their horses did get drowned, and allowing that a reasonable percentage of those thrown into the water scrambled out again, the standard of mediæval riding must have been about equal to that of the White Knight, who, when his horse stopped fell over its head, and when it went on again fell over its tail.

Occasionally the propelling agent, so to speak, was human, as in the case of a cloth-worker of Tadcaster, who, 'being annoyed with his wife,' flung her into the Wharfe and drowned her. The measure seems extreme, and he could not plead peril of shipwreck, the excuse of the Syracusan, who, 'when all ponderous things were to be exonerated out of the ship,' flung his wife into the sea 'because she was the greatest burden.'

In spite of a verdict of 'misadventure,' I cannot help feeling a little sceptical about an incident which took place at Bedford in 1220,

when William the miller was driving certain Jews in his cart, and at the bridge the cart fell into the water and three Jews were drowned. As I read the story there came into my mind Sam Weller's conversation with Mr. Pickwick about his father's remarkable accident with the voters: '"Here and there it is a wery bad road," says my father. "'Specially near the canal, I think," says the gentleman. . . . You wouldn't believe it, sir, but on the wery day as he came down with them woters his coach was upset on that 'ere wery spot and every man on 'em was turned into the canal.'

Occasionally, also, the victim was a voluntary one, as in the case of John Milner, who, with the contempt for consequences which we might expect from one of his name, jumped into the Ouse. The consequence for him was that he became what Mr. Mantalini called 'a demmed, moist, unpleasant corpse,' and the jury decided that he had acted 'by temptation of the Devil.' While they displayed a certain boldness in thus arraigning the Devil for procuring, aiding, and

abetting a felony, they showed more discretion in another quarter, for when a man and his wife were found struck by lightning, where a modern jury would have declared it an 'act of God' the mediæval jury preferred the less dogmatic and more reasonable verdict that 'no one is suspected.' It is pleasant to note that in another instance, where the body of a man struck by lightning was first found by his wife, the jury expressly exonerated her, saying 'she is not suspected' (of having done it).

I am not quite certain of the force of a verdict of 'by temptation of the Devil' in a case of suicide, but it seems to have been the half-way house between *felo-de-se* and madness, to have been, in fact, the mediæval equivalent of that 'temporary insanity' which is the invariable verdict in modern times. The idea that a man must be mad to take his own life, and that therefore all suicides were insane, had not occurred to the mediæval mind, but they evidently felt that there were cases in which the suicide was not himself, although he was not sufficiently

outside or beside himself to be considered an absolute lunatic. There are strange and grim little stories of madmen in some of these old records. One of these, not wanting in pathos in its evidence of good intentions diabolically twisted, tells how Robert de Bramwyk, a lunatic who had some lucid intervals (and was, therefore, probably not so closely guarded), in a fit of frenzy took his sister Denise, who had been deformed and hunchbacked from her birth, and, wishing to make her straight, cast her into a cauldron of hot water, and taking her out of this bath trampled upon her with his feet to straighten her limbs.

With the exception of this madman's empiric bone-setting I only remember to have come across one instance of an operation being mentioned in this particular class of coroner's records. This was in 1330, when Richard de Berneston, a surgeon of Nottingham, cut a 'wenne' on the arm of William de Brunnesley and William afterwards died of heart failure. It is rather remarkable that doctors seem

hardly ever to have been held responsible for the death of their patients, though in 1350 we

'. . . *cast her into a cauldron.*'

do find Thomas Rasyn, leech, and Pernel, his wife, pardoned for the death of John Panyers, miller, of Sidmouth, whom they were said to

have killed through ignorance of their art; the inclusion of the wife seems to point to a mediæval nursing home. As a rule, probably, when a patient died under a doctor's care, his relations took the matter philosophically and assumed that the treatment had been correct and that he would have died in any case. It was the patients who survived that made all the fuss. For instance, there was Thomas Medewe, the vicar of a Hertfordshire parish in the fifteenth century, who 'by goddys visitacion had an infirmyte in his throte.' The local practitioner, or his equivalent, who would probably have been a 'wise woman,' being unable to deal with it, the vicar came up to London and consulted John Dayvyle, surgeon, who gave him a plaster for his throat which did him much good and only cost 4*d.* Unfortunately for both parties, the surgeon finding that his patient was 'nygh hole' as a result of his first experiment insisted upon his having another plaster, for which he charged 20*d.* to make him 'thurgh hole.' The result was

disastrous, as the patient 'felle in suche infirmitye that he might not speke and was like therby to have dyed' if he had not called in another doctor. It was, in the circumstances, perhaps natural that the vicar expressed his feelings strongly when Dayvyle sent in a bill for 20*s.* for attendance. There was the case also of Edmund Broke, of Southampton, who came up to London to undergo an operation, and put himself in the hands of Nicholas Sax, who stipulated for a fee of 33*s.* 4*d.*, of which 13*s.* 4*d.* was paid in advance. The patient, according to his own account, was in jeopardy of his life through the 'defaute and unkunnyng' of Dr. Sax, and had to call in John Surgeon, 'dwelling at Powlez cheyn,' who cured him and to whom he paid the 20*s.* which his incompetent attendant claimed was due to him.

Of course there was another side to the question, patients then as now being more ready with promises when ill than with fees when well. There was William Robinson, for

instance, a haberdasher of Lombard Street, who fell ill with pestilence and sent for William Paronus, promising that if he would only save him 'he would reward him as well as ever he was rewarded for any cure'; but when, after a month's attendance, he was well again, he declined even to pay the doctor's out-of-pocket expenses incurred for drugs. And sometimes there were cases in which it was difficult to decide who was in the right. One such case came into court in 1292. Mauger le Vavassour, a member of a leading Yorkshire family, fell ill; his wife, Agnes, and other friends, including his uncle, Henry le Chapeleyn, sent for Master Otto of Germany, evidently a doctor of repute, promising him one mark to come and see the invalid, and further six marks if he would undertake his treatment. So Master Otto paid his visit and then went off to York to the apothecary's and compounded various medicines and healing drinks, which he gave to Mauger, with excellent effect. When the patient was convalescent Master

Otto put him on a very strict diet, so strict that Mauger grew restive, and his wife, who sympathised with his feelings, gave him various forbidden foods. The doctor, finding his orders disobeyed, declined to accept responsibility, washed his hands of the case and withdrew. The question then arose whether he was entitled to his fees or whether he had shown neglect by leaving his patient before he was fully cured. The jury decided that Master Otto ordered the strict diet for Mauger's good, and not, as had been suggested, with the object of keeping him weak, and so increasing the bill for attendance, but they also found that as a matter of fact the extra food did the patient good and not harm. The verdict being thus for both parties the judges were puzzled and reserved their decision.

Another rather curious point cropped up about the middle of the fifteenth century. Eryk de Vedica, one of the brethren of the Grey Friars of London, was a physician of skill and reputation, and was sent for by Alice,

wife of William Stede, a vintner. She seems to have been in a very bad way, and when Brother Eryk saw her and understood her 'grete age and jubertous sikeness' he was with difficulty persuaded to attempt her cure. However, after five weeks' attention he 'had soo doon hys parte vnto her that she thought herself wele amended in her body, she cowde hym grete thancke and gave hym 20*s.* for his labour.' And then her curmudgeon of a husband, who was possibly not particularly pleased at her recovery, sued Brother Eryk for taking the money, and technically the unfortunate friar had no defence, as 'the common law supposeth every receiving of the husband's goods or money by the hands of his wife without his licence or command to be a wrongful taking away of the same from him.' We will hope that the Court of Chancery, whose assistance was invoked, over-ruled the Common Law and did the friar justice.

It was not unusual for friars to have a knowledge of science and medicine, but a statement

that I read the other day in a book recently published, that most (I believe my author said 'all') mediæval doctors 'were, of course, monks' is singularly wide of the truth. On the contrary, in even the largest monasteries it was customary to call in a doctor from outside in any case of serious illness, and the greater houses frequently retained the services of a secular physician. The cathedral monastery of Winchester, for instance, in the fourteenth century, made an agreement with Master Thomas of Shaftesbury that he should attend the convent in return for his board and lodging, the board, it may be noticed, including a daily allowance of one and a half gallons of the best ale and a gallon of a smaller brew. It is probable also that Master Adam of St. Albans, surgeon, who came from the priory of Ely to attend King Edward I. in his last illness at Lanercost, was the cathedral doctor. There were, of course, medical attendants attached to the court; their salaries were not large, the surgeons of the first two Edwards being paid

only from one to two pounds a year, but there were perquisites in the shape of furred robes, gifts of money, or silver goblets from grateful patients, and substantial pickings in the shape of ecclesiastical benefices—the favourite way of pensioning a court physician being to give him one or more prebends or rectories. Occasionally the pension took the form of landed estate, as when Edward III. gave land in Kildare to his surgeon, John Leche, a grant which proved rather a white elephant, for early in the next reign Parliament, seeing the evils of absenteeism, ordered that all owners of estates in Ireland should reside on them in person or else pay for an able-bodied man to assist in policing the country, two alternatives equally trying to the old surgeon's feelings. With such slender and precarious remuneration it was excusable that the royal doctors should sometimes have an eye to the main chance, and Fabyan tells a story against one Master Dominic, physician (very much) in waiting to Elizabeth, Queen of Edward IV. Before the birth of her first child

'. . . called secretly at the chamber dore.'

(the Princess Elizabeth) Master Dominic had been very positive that it would be a boy, and so, when the time came, he stood outside the queen's room 'that he myght be the firste that shulde brynge tydynges to the kynge of the byrth of the prynce to the entent to have greate thanke and rewarde of the kynge; and lastly when he harde the childe crye, he knockyd or called secretly at the chamber dore, and frayned what the quene had. To whom it was answeryd by one of the ladyes, "what so ever the quenes grace hath here wythin, suer it is that a fole standithe there withoute." And so confused with thys answere, he deperted wythoute seynge of the kynge for that tyme.'

The position of the medical man who was not attached to the court or to some nobleman's suite is rather obscure. In London during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the surgeons of the city were under the control of two or more master surgeons who acted as universal consultants; any surgeon undertaking a case involving risk to life or limb being obliged to call in one of the

masters to see that his treatment was correct. In the same way the veterinary surgeons were at liberty to call in the advice of a master farrier, and if through conceit or negligence they did not do so and the horse they were treating died, then they would be responsible to the owner for its value. As to the country practitioner, it is not quite clear who licensed him to take the title of 'leech' or whether he merely assumed it. There were, no doubt, a certain number of men of learning in the provinces, and in 1478 Sir John Savage was able to find a 'connyng fisission' for Robert Pilkington in Macclesfield. He certainly required such a one, for, as a result of eating a mess of 'grene potage' containing poison he was 'swolne so grete that he was gyrd abowte his bodye in iij places with towells and gyrdylls' to prevent him bursting. When a man is in such a state it is 'a thousand to one if he lives the age of a little fish,' as Nicholas Culpeper would say, but the physician 'dyd grete cures to hym' and he recovered. As a rule, how-

ever, it is probable that the country leech had little more knowledge of the healing art than many of his patients. It must be remembered that a knowledge of simple herbal remedies

'. . . *gyrd abowte his bodye in iij places with towells and gyrdylls.*'

was pretty widely diffused, and an acquaintance with more elaborate preparations formed part of the education of the upper classes. Did not the lady of the manor almost to our own days dispense home-made medicines with moral

stimulants to her tenants, whose simple minds and *dura ilia* received therefrom much benefit? Yea, 'kynges and kynges sones and other noble men hath ben eximious phisicions,' and there is in the British Museum a book full of recipes for plasters and ointments, composed by Henry VIII. Half a century before that bluff but gouty monarch 'the gude Erl of Herforth was holden a gud surgen,' though he seems to have had a tendency towards extravagant multiplication of ingredients in his prescriptions. In humbler ranks of life every monastery had an Infirmarian who, though dependent on outside assistance in serious cases, was expected to treat the ordinary illnesses of his brethren, and at least to see that there was always ginger, cinnamon, and peony (this last most effectual for the incubus or nightmare) in his cupboard. It is noteworthy that in all the hundreds of hospitals founded prior to the Reformation, from St. Leonard's at York with its two hundred beds downwards, there appears to have been no

provision for medical attendance. The wardens were rarely medical men; Master Thomas Goldington, one of the surgeons of Edward III. was made warden of two hospitals, at Derby and Carlisle, but the only result was that he attended to his private practice and neglected the hospitals. Clearly the rudiments of nursing were assumed to be known to the resident chaplain or some of the inmates—more particularly the women. Wise women have doctored the country-side time out of mind, and in the reign of Elizabeth we even find one, Isabel Warick, practising surgery in York and requiring protection from her male rivals. A century earlier Alice Shevington, servant to William Gregory of London, 'pretendyng hirself to have had connyng in helyng of sore ighen,' spent much of her time attending to her neighbours' eyes instead of her master's house, wherefore he docked her of part of her munificent wages of 16*s.* a year.

But, of course, this lay knowledge of herbs and so forth was not enough, for, as Andrew Borde, that man of wit and sound learning,

said, quoting Galen, '"If Phisicions had nothing to do with Astronomy, Geomatry, Logycke and other sciences, coblers, curryars of lether, carpenters and smythes and al such manner of people wolde leave theyr craftes and be Phisicions," as it apereth nowe a dayes that many coblers be; fye on such ones!' Without a knowledge of astronomy how could Culpeper have discovered that a certain French quack was 'as like Mars in Capricorne as a Pomewater is an Apple,' and that therefore he was a fool? It was important also to comprehend the mystical properties of gems, many of which exercised as healing an influence as any herb. So well was this recognised that in 1217, when Alice Lunsford, a member of an old East Sussex family (whose later descendants endeavoured to extend its antiquity by forging Saxon ancestors with the delightfully improbable Christian names of David and Joseph), fell ill, she sent to Philip Daubigny and borrowed three rings from him, and when he asked for them back begged him, for the love of God,

not to take them away, as without them she could not recover. Unfortunately the troops of Louis the Dauphin plundered her house shortly afterwards, and although she did recover Philip lost his rings, one of them being a sapphire for which he would not have taken 50 marks.

Gems were not only held to exercise a beneficent influence when worn in rings or held in the mouth, but were also administered internally. Amongst the long list of medicines made for Edward I. during his last illness, in 1307, is 'a comforting electuary made with ambergis, musk, pearls, and jacinths, and pure gold and silver.' Lower down in the list occurs 'a precious electuary called Dyacameron,' and a fifteenth-century book of prescriptions shows that this was composed of ginger, cinnamon, clove, and other spices, black, white, and long pepper, musk, ambergris, 'the bone of a stag's heart,' coral, pure gold, and shavings of ivory, amongst other things. This same book shows a still more elaborate preparation, called 'The Duke's Electuary,'

containing fifty ingredients, but mostly herbal, and not so precious or indigestible as these others. These electuaries, which were a kind of medicated sweetmeat, seem to have been taken in large quantities, as Richard de Montpelier, King Edward's apothecary, prepared over 280 pounds of electuaries made with sugar. These cost a shilling the pound, while Dyacameron ran up to 13*s.* 4*d.* the pound, and four ounces of rose comfits (*sucurosset*) flavoured with pearls and coral cost £3, 13*s.* 4*d.* Oriental ambergris to put in the king's food and in his claret was another expensive item. But all these drugs and all the care of Master Nicholas de Tyngewyk, his physician, of whose skill the king held a high opinion, proved unavailing.

A list of drugs provided for the Scottish expedition in 1323 is chiefly of interest as showing that the virtue of a fine-sounding name for a medicine was recognised some six centuries before Mr. Ponderevo hit on the sonorous Tono-Bungay. Here are some

of the items; Oxerocrosium, Diaterascos, Apostolicon, Dyaculon, Ceroneum, Popilion, Agrippa, Gracia Dei—all of them compounds of the patent medicine types; Galbanum, Armoniak, Apoponak, Bedellum, Collofonium, Mastik, and Dragon's blood—simpler vegetable preparations; Seruse, Calamine, Litharge, and Tutie—which are mineral substances; Tutie being 'bred of the sparkles of brasen furnaces, whereinto store of the mineral Calamine beaten to dust, hath been cast.' Of the high-sounding preparations Popilion was so called from its containing poplar leaves; Diaterascos was a plaster compounded of pitch, wax, acetic acid, and various aromatics; Ceroneum was a similar plaster without the acid, containing rather more aromatics and also saffron, aloes, and litharge; and Dyaculon was a third variety of plaster, very remotely, if at all, connected with the adhesive Diachylon plasters of modern times. 'The oynment that is called Agrippa' was still used in the fifteenth century for deafness, and at that date Apos-

tolicon was made as follows: Take equal quantities of 'vermod (wormwood), smallache (water parsley), centori, waybred (? plantain), and the rote of osmond and als muche of egremoyne (agrimony) as of all the others,' seethe in vinegar and add an ounce of 'medwax (beeswax) that is multen in woman's milk' (a favourite solvent). To this is added alum, galbanum, pitch, and turpentine, and the whole worked up into an ointment. If this is not sufficiently elaborate for your purpose, 'Her is makyng of Gracia Dei: Take betanye, pympernel and vervayn, of ilkon an handfull, bothe crope and rote, and wasshe hem clene and stamp hem smalle and do hem in a new erthen pote and put therto a galon of white wyne, and if you may get no white wyne take red, and sethe them till yt come to a potell:' let it cool, strain through canvas, seethe again, and add half-a-pound of 'gud mede wax, bot loke the wax be molten first, and woman's milke of knave child and a pond of rosyn and a pond of gome litarge and a pond of galbanum and a

pond of popanelke (? opoponax) and a pond of arestolog rotundum (birth-wort) and an unce of mastike wel poudred,' stir well and then 'do als mykill baume (balsam) als weies a peny and a ferthyng and lete it sethe whil you may say iij *Miserere mei deus* all the hole salme'; take off the fire, add gum turpentine, and stir till melted, strain and skim off any dirt with a feather. When cold it should be worked up between the hands until it becomes of sticky consistency, it is then to be spread on clean linen or leather, and is good for all manner of sores that be perilous. There is another method of preparing Gracia Dei which was used by 'Hopkyn of the fermory of Killyngworth,' that is to say in the infirmary at Kenilworth Priory, and a third, devised by 'the gude erl of Herforth' which is much more elaborate, the herbs used being 'betany, vervayne, pympernel, comfrey, osmond, dayshy, mousher (mouse-ear) weybrede, rib (? rhubarb), milfoile (the yarrow, which in Saxon leechdom seems to have been held good for every-

thing from headaches to snake-bites), centory, anence, violete, flos campi (? campion), smalache, sauge, and egremoyn.'

When these simple remedies were not successful recourse could always be had to charms—either sheer pagan gibberish or rhyming prayers and invocations of saints. It was obviously appropriate for the sufferer from toothache to appeal to St. Appolonia, who was tortured by having her teeth broken with a mallet, but it was less obvious why a man with the falling sickness should cut his little finger and write with his blood the names of the three kings, Jasper, Balthazar, and Melchior, on a piece of parchment and hang it round his neck; nor do I know why SS. Nichasius and Cassian should be invoked against any 'erwig or any worme that is cropyn into a mans hed.' It was as well in any case to be sure that the charm was genuine, as Roger atte Hache found in 1382. His wife, Joan, being ill, he accepted the word of one Roger Clerk of Wandsworth that he

'. . . led through the middle of the city.'

was skilled in medical lore and paid him 12*d.* to undertake her cure. Clerk took a leaf of parchment out of a book and sewed it up in cloth of gold and bade Joan put it round her neck. When she got no better her husband grew suspicious and summoned Clerk for fraud. Clerk, being asked to explain the value of the piece of parchment, said that it was a good charm for fever and contained the words 'Anima Christi sanctifica me' and other similar pious expressions, but upon examination it was found that there were no such words upon it, and as he proved to be ignorant of physic and illiterate, it was adjudged that he should be led through the middle of the city, with trumpets and pipes, riding on a horse without a saddle, with the parchment and a whetstone (the recognised symbol of a liar) hung round his neck, and in front of him the unseemly emblem of the medical profession.

V

THOSE IN AUTHORITY

IT is a common delusion, or, not to beg the question before producing evidence, a common opinion, that England in olden times, by which I mean that vague period when all words were spelled with an 'e' at their end and most with a 'y' in the middle, was a 'merrie' place. This idea is held not only by the *laudatores temporis acti*, who find it safer to repine for a past which can never be recovered than to enthuse over a future which may arrive and prove disappointing, but also by those energetic persons who set out to make the world enjoy itself and imagine that their schemes for compulsory happiness will really only restore a lost gaiety to the nation. Life in the Middle Ages was undoubtedly more highly coloured, more varied, more

picturesque, but that it was merrier is at least a doubtful assumption. As the life of a people is reflected in their arts, we may compare the life of the Middle Ages to the quaint, irregular lines of some unimproved village street, or to the older parts of such towns as Winchester and Guildford, and contrast it with the mid-Victorian era, the flattest and dullest of all periods, as typified by Brixton, or with the frivolity of the present day, portrayed in the outbreak of terra-cotta and white wood flimsinesses all over the country. But the picture is not complete. In the background, behind the straight sameness of 'Alma Terrace,' or the quirked and joggled sameness of 'Mafeking Avenue,' lies nothing more terrible than the 'desirable residence' or the 'eligible mansion.' Behind your picturesque old-world cottages frowns the shadow of the feudal fortress. And, as Huxley remarked to the young man who said that he did not see what difference it would have made to him if his great-grandfather had or had not been a monkey, 'it must

have made a lot of difference to your great-grandmother.'

It was not without reason that such names as Batvilayne, Scorchevilayne, and Maungevilayne are found amongst the landowning classes. There were men who would beat, scorch, or devour their villeins, and some six-and-a-half centuries ago an ancestor of the present Lord Ashburnham could oppress his tenants until they were reduced to literal beggary, and when they complained to the Justices could airily reply that they were his villeins and, short of injury to life and limb, he need not answer them. Such was the position of the bulk of the peasantry, but in practice they did not often suffer by it, for it was obviously to the advantage of the landlord to have prosperous tenants. It was at the hands of the officials, the swarm of stewards, bailiffs, catchpoles, and so forth, that the peasants, yeomen, and smaller gentry suffered. These men, secure in the protection of a chain of superiors reaching back to some great noble,

lived on their neighbours, wringing money from them on every, or no, pretext. A favourite weapon was the jury list; the frequency with which juries were summoned and the resulting inconvenience to those called away from their work made the more wealthy willing to pay well for exemption; then money could be obtained by summoning four or five times as many jurors as were required and taking bribes from the superfluous to let them go home again. Another common object of the country-side was the 'scotale,' which was a kind of bean-feast. No doubt this lent an appearance of merriness to life in the country, just as the wriggling of the worm on the hook lent it a superficial air of gaiety which deceived old Isaak Walton, but it is questionable if the feasters really enjoyed themselves, as they knew that the ale which formed the main feature of the meal was brewed from malt which they had unwillingly contributed, and that they were paying for the (compulsory) privilege of consuming their own produce.

Nor did the townsmen escape entirely; even five hundred years ago the Christmas box was an established extortion, and, in 1419, William Sevenok, Mayor of London, had to forbid the custom of the servants of the mayor, sheriffs, and corporation begging gifts from the tradesmen at Christmas, as it was found that they used threats towards those who would not give and accepted the gifts of others as bribes to overlook their offences against the trading laws. Not only at Christmas did the servants of the city and the court fleece the tradesmen; the doubtful privilege of supplying the royal court with provisions could be, and frequently was, avoided by a gift to the purveyors, and one result was that rogues from time to time went round the breweries pretending to be court purveyors and taking money to leave the ale alone. A rogue of a similar type, with a turn of humour, was William Pykemyle, who in 1379 went to the town house of the Countess of Norfolk, and, pretending to be a royal messenger, left word that she was to dine with

the King at Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, next day; having received from her a reward of 3*s.* 4*d.* (royal messengers always expecting a substantial tip) he went on to the Countess of Bedford and gave a similar message, only making the place of dining Eltham. Whether the ladies kept their appointments is not recorded, but the gay deceiver was caught and committed to Newgate.

If the men of the Middle Ages had had nothing more to complain of than extortion by threats and trickery they might have been merry enough, but when the bailiffs exercised their powers of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment it was another matter. From the sheriffs downwards those 'clothed with a little brief authority' used it unscrupulously to fill their own pockets, dragging men off to prison on false accusations, or on none, and causing convicted felons to accuse the innocent of participation in their crimes. Release from prison depended solely upon the payment of a fine to the officer concerned, and was almost

as easily available for the guilty as for the innocent. Upon occasion the powers of the law could be used to assist the criminal and punish his victim. During the misrule of the last years of Henry III., one, Wilkin of Gloseburne, accused Gilbert Wood of killing his son; Gilbert promptly turned the tables by bribing the gaoler of York, who arrested Wilkin on a charge of theft, bound him naked to a post in the prison, and kept him without food until he paid 40*s*. About the same time, in Suffolk, a man stole six geese belonging to Constance de Barnaucle; possibly he would have argued that they were 'barnacle geese,' and as this species notoriously grew on trees they were *feræ naturæ*, in which there could be no property. If so, he must have felt that his case was weak, as he ran away, pursued by the lady's servant. The thief was caught by the bailiffs of Thingoe Hundred, but either they were friends of his or they saw a chance of getting the geese themselves, for they let him go free, and when the pursuer came up

they showed half-a-dozen other geese, which he naturally failed to identify; they then

'. . . *failed to identify the geese.*'

talked big about libel actions and false accusations and terrified 4*s.* out of the unlucky man's pockets.

Besides accusations of actual misdeeds, charges of opposing a predominant or favouring a fallen faction could be used for purposes of extortion. Towards the end of the reign of Edward II., when the Despensers were in power, Alan of Teesdale, chamberlain to the younger Despenser, with the assistance of Geoffrey Eston, the villainous gaoler of York, started a report that Sir John de Barton had spoken ill of Hugh le Despenser, whereat Hugh was much moved and furiously threatened Sir John, who for fear of his power had to give them lands to appease their lord. The same two scoundrels burnt down part of one of Alan's own mills and then laid the blame first on Sir John de Barton, then on Thomas Vipont, and finally on the Abbot of Byland, all of whom, for fear of the Despenser, paid heavy compensation. They further extorted lands from Master Thomas de Leuesham by threatening to accuse him of having been a partisan of Andrew de Harclay, who, after winning the earldom of Carlisle by his loyalty at Borough-

bridge in 1322, had, the following year, been dramatically degraded and executed as a traitor. Nearly a century earlier, Robert Passelewe, Justice of the Jews, had extorted £60 from John le Prestre, a wealthy Jew, by threatening to commit him to Corfe Castle for having financed the Bishop of Carlisle and Hubert de Burgh, then in disgrace. From the same Jew Passelewe extorted, amongst other things, a cameo worth 40 marks; he seems to have had an appreciation for jewels, as he appropriated a 'camehew' and an emerald belonging to a Jew who was hanged, and made Benedict Crispin give him another cameo, which he afterwards gave to the Queen. Crispin was fleeced by several persons in high places and had to part with another of his cameos, 'on which was engraved a chariot with two angels,' to Peter de Rievaux, the Treasurer.

If the Jews were plundered we may at least put it to the credit of our ancestors that they showed a fine impartiality in according similar

treatment to Christian clergy. The sheriff of Yorkshire, in 1315, wishing to persuade Master Henry de Percy, rector of Wharrom, to surrender his church, handed him over to Geoffrey Eston,[1] the gaoler of York, of whom we have already said something, who bound him to a convicted criminal and kept him five days without food or drink; at the end of that time he paid £20 to be released, but he kept his church. Encouraged by this, the sub-sheriff followed his superior's example and brought the rector of Whixley to Geoffrey, who confined him 'in a horrible place in the prison' until he produced 20 marks. Most prisons, probably, had a 'horrible place,' usually an underground dungeon, such as 'the pit of the gaol' at Exeter, or the 'fosse' at

[1] The record of one of this man's acts of torture is worth preserving, though it is, for obvious reasons, best left in the original Latin: 'cepit unum vermem qui vocatur clok [*i.e.* a sheep tick] et posuit infra virgam Roberti de Alverton et ligavit virgam cum parva corda et posuit ipsum Robertum super unam cordam et ligavit cordam de una trabe ad aliam et fecit ipsum moveri super cordam predictam et membra sua frotari quousque finem fecit pro x marcis.'

Newgate, or the place in the King's Bench prison called by the grim humour of the fifteenth century 'Paradise,' from which Alexander Lokke, who had been detained there 'alle this holy tyme of Cristemasse,' begged to be removed to some other prison. Apart from these dungeons the comfort of the prisoners depended largely on their possession of money; they were not 'lodged at his majesty's expense,' but were dependent upon money supplied by friends or on the alms of the charitable, and their position when the gaoler was a tyrant was unenviable. In the reign of Henry VIII. the keeper of Norwich gaol, Andrew Asketell, 'of his uncharitabill and covetous mind' oppressed the poor prisoners, charging them twice as much for ale as it cost outside—and ale, it must be remembered, was in those days really 'the people's food in liquid form'—and when kind people sent 'a potte ale' to the prisoners he made his servants pour the drink in the streets and break the vessels. But he did this once

too often, when 'a litill boy haveng a veray power woman to his moder in prison brought to her to ye prison wyndow a crok with ale.' Edward Rede, alderman and J.P., seeing her drink thus snatched from her, kindly sent her 'a cruse with drynk.' The arrival of this widow's cruse so annoyed the keeper that he came up to the alderman and insulted him, calling him 'a Bedlam man,' and as a result he saw prison life from a fresh point of view. Some two centuries earlier Newgate was controlled by Edmund le Lorimer, who ill-treated his prisoners shockingly, keeping them short of food, depriving them of their share in the common alms, and preventing them communicating with their friends. He robbed them, taking from Roger Martel a gold cross with four garnets and a 'pere crapaudyn' or toad-stone, the precious jewel which a toad bears in its head and which is an invaluable antidote to poison, and he inflicted such severe 'penaunce' to extort money that many died, including a knight, Sir John de Horn, and

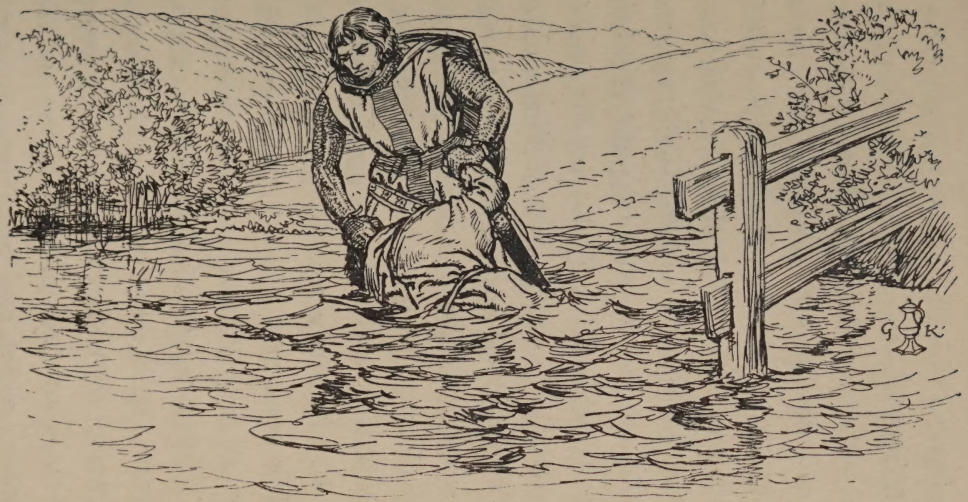
that Roger de Colney, being loaded with irons and deprived of food, snatched a knife from a companion and cut his throat.

All those in authority were not brutes; it is even recorded of a Suffolk bailiff that finding on his recovery from illness that his deputy had been guilty of extortion, he returned the money and dismissed the deputy. But the reports from Yorkshire in 1275 were fairly typical; the bailiff of the Earl of Lincoln had done 'many acts of oppression, rapine, and injuries beyond belief'; 'many other things, beyond number and astonishing,' were related of the sub-sheriff, and 'innumerable devilish acts of oppression' were accredited to the steward of Earl Warenne. The earl himself was a man of violence, who had turned about a fifth part of the county of Sussex into a game preserve, and maintained armed keepers to prevent the peasants from driving the deer out of their corn. The story is well known how, when King Edward's commissioners demanded by what title he held his lands, he

produced a rusty sword and said 'by this my ancestors won their lands and by this I will defend them.' Like most well-known stories this is apocryphal, and in any case a distaff would have been more appropriate, as his lands had descended through an heiress, but that he would have been willing to protect his lands with the sword is likely enough. One of his descendants, the Earl of Surrey of the time of Henry VIII. seems to have inherited some of his lawlessness, as he was charged with 'a lewde and unsemely manner of walking in the night abowght the stretes and breaking wyth stonebowes (*i.e.* catapults) of certeyne wyndowes.' It does not appear that he wanted 'Votes for Peers' and, in fact, he admitted that he 'hadde verye evyll done therein,' and was sent to the Fleet prison.

Life must certainly have been more exciting, if not merrier, in now peaceful Sussex when Earl John de Warenne was alive. He was carrying on a sort of private war with his neighbour, Robert Aguillon, who was also on

bad terms with his other neighbour, William de Braose, while further west, at Midhurst, was John de Bohun, who displayed his contempt for the law by attacking Luke de Vienne on the high road and ducking him in a horse-pond when he was on his way to hold a court. The son and namesake of this William de Braose showed his temper by insulting one of the Justices of the King's Court who had given judgment against him. Edward I. was not the man to excuse such conduct; he had, indeed, banished the Prince of Wales from court for insolence towards a judge, and Braose had to walk in penitential garb through Westminster Hall when the court was sitting and apologise to the justice. With such examples set by their lords it is not surprising that the smaller men adopted an attitude of swagger and arrogance, riding with armed followers through markets and fairs for the mere pleasure of frightening the people. As an example of apparently pointless insolence, the constable of Shrewsbury gave his groom 4*d.* to go through



'. . . ducking him in a horse-pond.'

the village of Cressage calling out 'Wekare, Wekare,' to insult both men and women. The character of the insult is not obvious, but it was evidently clear to those concerned, as a woman dared to remonstrate; the groom struck at her and wounded a man who came to her assistance, but then had to fly and was shot—for which his lord obtained full compensation.

Whatever the meaning of 'Wekare,' there can be no doubt of the insult conveyed by Robert Sutton to Roger of Portland, clerk of the Sheriff of London, when he exclaimed in full court, 'Tprhurt, tprhurt!' This monosyllable is a very trumpet blast of contempt and its significance surely did not require to be emphasised by Robert's 'raising his thumb'—whether to his nose or not it is not stated, which is a pity, as it would have been interesting to find the 'long nose' flourishing in 1290. City Officers, and more particularly mayors and aldermen, were very touchy, seeing and punishing 'vile and abominable abuse' in the most harmless retort, and my sympathy is certainly

with Collard, the cobbler, who was sent to prison at Norwich because, when the mayor ordered him to take off his beard he refused to do so and said, 'Noo, I was ones shaven and I made an othe I wolde never have off my berde again, I was so evell shaven.' Still there is no doubt that however arbitrary the authorities may have been they also had their trials, and, if officials often abused their powers, their was another side to the question. Smaller men than William de Braose could, upon occasion, tell the judges what they thought of them. In 1300 one Henry de Biskele came into the Sussex county court and asked leave to say certain matters 'on the king's behalf,' and having thus obtained silence and the attention of the whole court, he broke out into violent abuse of one of the justices, calling him a liar and using other opprobrious terms, for which he was lucky to escape with a fine of 20*s*. Some fifty years later a more violent act of contempt of court occurred at Pevensey. John de Molyns, the Queen's steward, came to hold a

court there, but being busy appointed a deputy to take his place in the morning; this official seems to have irritated the townsmen, and when he ordered them to withdraw outside the bar, contrary to their local custom, Roger Porter replied by challenging him to come outside and fight. During the luncheon interval the deputy reported the state of affairs, and in the afternoon the steward himself came to the court, preceded by the portreeve carrying his white wand of office, but the townsmen refused to come when summoned, Roger and Simon Porter in particular declaring that they were not bound to attend. At last the steward rose in wrath and started to seize the two Porters, who fled to their house and with drawn swords stood in the doorway. A pitched battle ensued between them and the steward's men, in which several were injured, but in the end victory rested with the law.

Even the King's Court at Westminster was not safe from disturbance. In 1332 John Parles, acting as attorney for Adam Basset in a

plea of debt against Florence de Aldham, was waiting in the great hall at Westminster, where

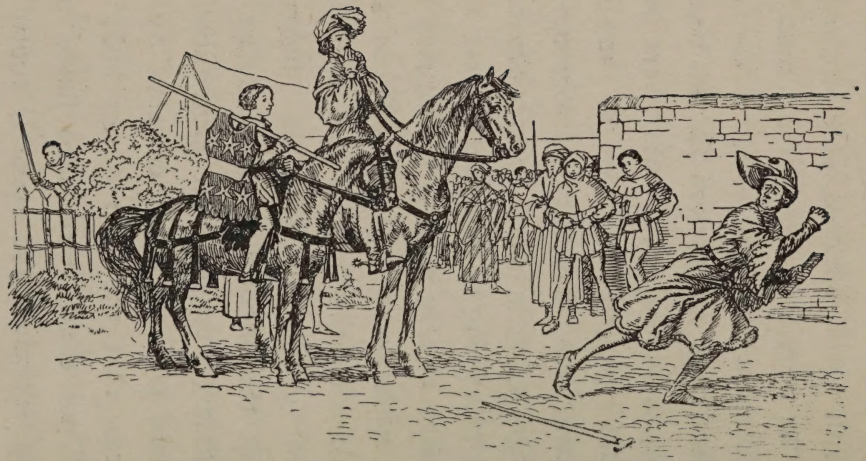
'. . . *with drawn swords stood in the doorway.*'

the court was in session. He was sitting on a table 'close to the sellers of jewels,' from

which it would seem that the lower end of the hall was used for stalls, or at any rate for peddling jewellery, even while cases were proceeding. Presently Florence came up with two men and abused John Parles, threatening to kill him if he did not abandon the suit; Richard Calware dragged him off the table and struck him a blow which drew blood and Thomas Newark whipped out a knife and would have killed him if he had not been restrained. John at once made his way to the bar and complained to the judges, who ordered the arrest of his assailants, but they struggled towards the door and were joined by Thomas of Thornhamton with his sword drawn. But the clerks of the court, apprentices, and attorneys barred the doors and disarmed them, and they were all handed over to the warden of the Tower.

In all these cases the disturbers of the peace met with prompt defeat, but sometimes they were more successful, though their success was usually temporary and vengeance overtook

them sooner or later. No courts seem to have been so unpopular as those of the Church; dealing with moral offences, they touched the lives of the people in a way which must have led to constant irritation, even if the archdeacons and their summoners had not been unfair and extortionate. That they were so was the pretty general opinion of mediæval Englishmen, from Chaucer to his contemporary John Belgrave, who, when the archdeacon of Leicester was going to hold a court, set up in his church a clearly written bill setting forth that the archdeacon and his officials might well rank with the judges who condemned Susannah, giving unrighteous judgment, oppressing the innocent, and suffering evil-doers. This so terrified the archdeacon and his officials, possibly made cowards by their consciences, that they dared not hold their courts. Civil courts were also liable to be broken up, especially the open-air courts held by sheriffs. On one occasion, in the fourteenth century, when the sheriff of Sussex



'He incontinently fled.'

was holding such a court, John Ashburnham rode up, with a small boy bearing his tabard, and so threatened the sheriff that he incontinently fled. To hasten his going Ashburnham whistled on his fingers—a street-boy's accomplishment to which I must admit I have never managed to attain in spite of repeated efforts—at which whistle his esquire and other men in ambush suddenly rose up. Even the assize courts were liable to be interfered with, especially in the north, and at the end of the reign of Edward II. there were in Lancashire several men of position who rode about with armed bands and turned up at the courts with fifty or sixty ruffians to persuade their adversaries not to proceed with their suits, or, if such peaceful picketing proved unavailing, to terrorise the justices. Chief of these was Sir Walter Bradshaw. He had been one of the sworn adherents of Sir Adam Banaster in his rebellion, and having assisted in the attack on Liverpool Castle and the capture of Halton, had fled the country after the defeat of his

friends at Preston. Returning later, he carried on a private war with Sir Richard de Holand, another ruffian of the same kidney, each of them riding about with small armies, oppressing each other's tenants and openly defying the courts. These quarrels between county families were undoubtedly more exciting when the process of cutting one another was conducted with swords instead of with averted eyes and upturned noses, but whether they were more conducive to the merriness of their rival retainers may be doubted. These retainers, if we may trust Sir Ralph Evers, did not always play their parts with the politeness and courtesy which their masters displayed, and, in fact, on one occasion he remonstrated with Sir Roger Hastings' servant, saying, 'Ye false hurson kaytyffes, I shall lerne you curtesy and to knowe a gentilman.' It is possible that he was feeling irritated at the time, as he had been lying in wait to ambush Sir Roger, and it must have been annoying to find that he had only caught his servants. Sir Roger himself

seems to have been rather quick-tempered; he had a grudge against one Ralph Jenner, and on his way to church on Christmas Day discovered that Ralph was in the church; he at once decided that the season of peace and goodwill was a suitable occasion to make an end of his quarrel (and of his adversary), but the vicar flung himself on his knees before him, while Lady Hastings ran up to Ralph Jenner exclaiming, 'Woo worthe man this day! The chirche wolbe suspended and thou slayn withoute thou flee away and gette thee oute of his sighte.' Whereupon Ralph, either out of consideration for the parishioners or himself, prudently fled.

It sometimes happened that these imperious gentry reaped the reward of their own lawlessness and goaded their oppressed tenants to active rebellion. As early as the twelfth century the sheriff of Hants is found grimly entering in his accounts money spent on doing justice on the peasants who burned their lord. At Faccombe in the same county, in 1426,

John Punchardon, lord of the manor, was dragged from his bed one Sunday night, carried out into the fields, and there done to death. In this case there was probably some personal feeling in the matter, as the murderers included five members of the family of Cosyn, whose ancestors had formerly held the manor, but who had now come down to the position of labourers. A case in which the motive of rebellion was more clearly resentment to oppression occurred at Preston in Sussex, in 1280, when the villeins of Simon de Pierpoint set fire to his manor-house, and with drawn knives and flourished axes compelled him to swear upon the Gospels that he would demand no services from them without their consent, and would take no action against them for their violence. At the same time they destroyed their lord's tabard, so beat his charger that it could never be used again and slew his 'gentle falcon,' thus wreaking their wrath on the outward signs of his nobility. Such revolts were much more common in

towns; for instance, at Lynne, in 1313, when Robert Muhaut tried to exercise his authority in a new direction, a crowd of tradesmen, under the leadership of the prior, assaulted his house, dragged him out and made him stand on a stall in the market-place and swear on the Host that he would not interfere with the town officers. At Bristol, also about the same time, the burgesses quarrelled with the castellan, barricaded the streets and erected an embattled wall from behind which they shot into the castle, and at Oxford the watchmen were on several occasions shot at with arrows:—I have known, in more recent times, a casual shot at a proctor with a lump of sugar have more disastrous effects—to the shooter.

But if the lords of manors, town officials, and judges occasionally found their authority slighted and their persons endangered by the disrespect of those who should have been subservient to them, their trials were not to be compared with those of the inferior officers such as bailiffs. In the fourteenth century,

'. . . compellyd them for to devour the same writte.'

when Philip of Berwick was elected as bailiff of Hailsham, he had to fly for his life to escape from a certain John of Buckholt, who terrorised the whole neighbourhood, chasing the vicar into his church, killing several persons, and so frightening the coroner that he dared not hold any inquests. With such men about as this John of Buckholt, who was known as king among his people, the life of a bailiff was not a happy one, and in particular, the life of the process-server was exciting, but not necessarily merry. It can hardly have been cheering to the man who had to serve a writ in Drayton Basset to know that the offenders were boasting that 'whoo so ever wold be so bolde to serve any warrant there shuld runne upon a pycheforke.' It was also not an uncommon experience that Thomas Talbot and Thomas Gaiford had when they served a writ on Agnes Motte, who 'reysyd upp her neghburs with wepyns drawen for to slee and mordre the said bryngers of the writte and compellyd them for to devour the same writte and ther,

sitting upon ther knees, in saving of ther lyves,

'. . . *thrust him out of the church.*'

eete the writte bothe wex and parchement,' in fact, from the number of similar instances

recorded it would almost seem that writ-servers must have been accustomed to a diet of wax and parchment. There seems also to have been a custom of serving writs in church, not unattended with risk, as the sacredness of the place does not seem always to have subdued the temper of the recipient. When William Nash served a writ on John Archer in Ilmingdon churchyard he retorted by threatening to make him eat it, and afterwards, as Nash was kneeling in the church, he came up to him and said, 'Pray, longenekked horesson, by Goddes armes, thou shalt be hanged ere I ete holy bred.' John Cheyney, also, when he was served with a writ in church, took the server by the shoulders and thrust him out of the church, saying that he would slit his nose, stove his eyes, crop his ears, and 'make hym a curtall.'

No, taking into consideration the injuries inflicted by the more powerful men in authority upon those subject to them and the pains suffered by those having the responsibilities of

office without its powers, I do not think the mediæval populace was always merry and bright, and if any one, after reading this article, still thinks that England in the Middle Ages was a 'merrie' place, I can only say with Robert Sutton, 'Tprhurt, tprhurt!'

VI

IVORY AND APES AND PEACOCKS

THERE is a sentence in the biblical account of the wonders of Solomon's reign that has always had a fascination for me. 'Once in three years came the navy of Tarshish bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks.' And the fascination lies not in the crude magnificence of tusks and ingots, the burnished brilliance of peacocks, or the uncanny, too human, grotesqueness of apes, but in all the varied multitude of unnamed articles which must have constituted the cargo of those far-faring ships of Tarshish —gaudy tissues interwoven with bettle-wings, strange shells, jewel-crusted swords, carvings in sandal-wood and in the wood of the mysterious almug tree. Possibly the almug tree is not mysterious to the well-informed man, but

I admit that I have always carefully avoided looking it up; I might say, as was said of the purple cow, 'I never saw an almug tree, I never want to see one,' because I am certain that it would prove a vast disappointment. The unlading of a ship is an enlarged and, it must be admitted, less personal version of the unpacking of a Christmas hamper, a joy apportioned to childhood, not, in nine cases out of ten, because in our maturer years we lose the appreciation of disinterring the unexpected from swathings of paper, string, and straw, but because the opportunities are denied us. Of course, it is given to few to unpack a ship, and there may be persons of little imagination to whom a bill of lading seems dull and uninspiring, but to me every such list is a potential hamper. When the bill of lading is of the fifteenth century there is added something of the feeling which we have when turning out a drawer in an old forgotten bureau of our great-grandmother's. The everyday objects of that time are now

unfamiliar, and our ingenuity is taxed to guess the use of some of them, while on the other hand it is quite a shock to find that other things which we still use were known so long ago.

The hold of a ship, like poverty, makes strange bed-fellows acquaint. A hundred distaves, emblems of peaceful home-life, came into London port in 1390 side by side with ninety-three dozen swords, these latter for Gerard van Barle, who must have been either an armourer in business on a very large scale, or else an army contractor. Six hundred oranges, at fifteen a penny, we find sandwiched between eight barrels of varnish and nine glass cups; a jar of preserved dates is thrust in between twelve yards of linen cloth and a barrel containing seven and a half dozen beaver hats. A ship of Dieppe came into Winchelsea harbour in 1490 with damask and satin and pipes of wine, razors and needles and mantles of leopard skins, five gross of playing-cards and eight gross of latten 'Agnus

Dei.' These last, which I regret to say seem to have been considerably less valued than the 'devil's books' which accompanied them, were plaques stamped with the figure of the holy Lamb, and it would seem that they were so common that the word became a synonym for a plaque, as in an inventory of the jewels of Henry VII. occurs 'an Agnus of the Salutation of Our Lady.' In the same way the component parts of the rosary became so intimately associated in men's minds with prayers that when we read in a list of cargo of 'paternosters' or 'bedys' of amber, coral, tin, or 'tree' it is impossible to be sure whether they were rosaries or beads in the modern sense of ornaments. Devotional objects naturally figured largely in the imports of mediæval days, images of painted wood or tin occurring with frequency in the London customs

'*latten "Agnus Dei."*'

accounts of 1390, and the alabaster carvings for which England, and in particular Nottingham, was famous form quite the most interesting of our exports in the fifteenth century. As a whole it must be admitted that our exports at that time were very dull compared to our imports; cloth, hides, and corn are but uninspiring merchandise, and although the frequent mention of ale and beer might cheer the heart of Mr. Belloc or the late Mr. Calverley it leaves me cold. One item, however, is interesting in the fifteenth-century exports from Bristol, and that is the constant occurrence in cargoes for Ireland, and for nowhere else, of casks of 'corrupt wine.' This looks like 'another injustice to Ireland.' With this untempting liquor went a good quantity of honey, possibly to counteract its acidity, and of 'battery-ware,' which was really such things as kettles, but may have been endeared to the Irish from an imaginary connection with assault.

If the exported cloth was uninspiring in its

lack of variety the same charge cannot be brought against the imported stuffs. There is some room for imagination in the cargo of Matthew Clayson's boat, which brought kerchiefs of Cyprus and Syria (so at least I interpret *cirian*), oriental kerchiefs and glittering (*relusant*) kerchiefs, with 707 lb. of pins wherewith to fasten them. There is also something satisfactory about baudrik powdered with Cyprian gold, and even about chamelet and sarcenet. I own to a delight in the old drapery terms, and, whatever their merits as materials, I feel that our modern trade terms such as viyella and eoline (if these be their names) are feeble and finicking besides arras, bayes, bewpers, boulters, borratoes, buffins, bustyans, bombacyes, calimancoes, carrells, dornicks, frisadoes, fustians, grograines, mockadoes, minnikins, makarells, oliotts, pomettes, plumettes, perpetuanas, rashes, russells, sayes, stamells, tukes, tamettes, and woadmolles. But if these and similar words have a fascination it is partly a fascination of the unknown,

and I should be grateful to any one who could tell me what it was that Walter Hake brought into London port in 1390, for, besides two barrels with fourteen nests of mazer cups and other recognisable goods, he carried three thousand five hundred 'redwark,' ten hundred 'ruskyn,' as much 'popl,' and, most puzzling of all, eight thousand 'of good work' (*boni operis*). I admit the temptation to endow the work with plurality and to set this load of good works in opposition to a contemporary Rabelaisian cargo of 'fartes of Portingale.'

So far the cargoes of our ships have not greatly resembled those of the ships of Tarshish, but, if the peacocks are to seek, we can easily find the ivory, in the shape of combs, and as to the apes the *Clement* of Rye in 1490 brought home four dozen baboons (*baboynes*). It must, however, be admitted that these baboons would not have found a home at the Zoo—they were in fact little grotesque figures, and in that sense the word occurs often in mediæval inventories.

Edward III. had not only a number of pieces of plate with 'babewyns' upon them, but one cup described as gilt and enamelled with 'diverse babwynrie.' At the same time the real monkey was a common enough object; he figures in the margin of scores of illuminated manuscripts, playing innumerable pranks, not infrequently in the dress of a priest, a monk, or a friar. Monkeys were kept by many of the nobles, and when Thomas Becket went, as Chancellor of England, on an embassy to the court of France an ape sat on every pack horse of his gorgeous cavalcade. The merchandise of Venice in 1436 included 'Apes and japes and marmusettes tayled,' and so far was the ape a common import that at many seaports monkeys figured in the customs lists, the due at Norwich being 40*d.* each, no small sum. With the monkey in

'. . . *playing innumerable pranks.*'

these lists is also found the bear, who at Norwich paid 42*d.* for admission to the country. Bears were even commoner sights than monkeys, for not only were there the performing bears in charge of itinerant showmen, but many of the poor brutes were kept for sport, to be baited by dogs. It was probably for purposes of sport that Sir John Bourchier, Earl of Bath, kept half-a-dozen bears, which after the Reformation he stabled in the dismantled priory of the Black Friars at Fisherton, near Salisbury. There they lived happily until, according to Harry Sutton, their keeper, John Davy and Agnes his wife with other naughty and evil-disposed persons broke into the close where they were kept, and Agnes, 'being thene of most wyckyd and damnable disposicion,' scattered poisoned bread on the ground and in the water where the bears drank. As a result three of the bears died, as did also a poor man's sow that drank of the pond; and a poor woman who washed her face in the water 'so swelled that she was like to have died,' which

I take leave to think was an exaggeration on the part of Harry Sutton. There is always another side to every story, and according to John Davy he had a lease of part of the friary lands, and his wife was quite peaceably walking there when Sutton, to frighten her away, untied 'the grettyste and most terryble bere' and set him at her, whereat she being 'sore affrayed and abashed' ran away and in running fell over a sow, not the poor man's sow that died, but a sow of lead, and received a hurt from which she died. The two versions are singularly divergent, and if Sutton could show three dead bears and a sow in support of his story, Davy could show a dead wife in support of his.

Henry III. was the proud possessor of a polar bear, which used to be taken for a swim in the Thames to disport itself and to catch fish, no doubt to the great joy of the young Londoners. This was a present from the King of Norway, and gifts of strange beasts were often made to our kings, the favourites

naturally being lions and leopards, in allusion to the royal arms, the Black Prince on one occasion sending his father a lion and a leopard. In passing it may be remarked that it is a curious trait of the heraldic lion that it cannot look a man in the face; when a lion looks at you it becomes a leopard. This, I admit, sounds rather like the schoolboy's description of the tortuous river of Palestine, 'The Jordan runs straight down the middle of the map, but when you look at it it wriggles,'—but it is none the less a fact. In early heraldry the lean and fearsome beast that does duty for a lion when seen in profile is called a leopard when its full face is shown; it is true that a later generation of heraldic writers converted the three golden leopards of England into 'lions passant guardant,' but leopards they were, and, for those of us who prefer the heraldry of the classic period to its debased and jargonised descendant, leopards they remain. At the same time, as the live lions could hardly be expected to look continuously over their left shoulders, the

'When a lion looks at you it becomes a leopard.'

royal menagerie at the tower was usually stocked with real leopards as well as lions. For generations, and indeed centuries, the lions of the Tower enjoyed much the same privileged position as the eponymous bears of Berne, and were so emphatically the sight to which all country cousins, by a humane version of 'Christianos ad leones,' had to be taken that their name became, and remains, synonymous with all that is double-asterisked by Baedeker.

Mediæval Englishmen seem to have a partiality for strange beasts, combined with a reluctance to pay exorbitant fees for seeing them. In 1364 Edward III. had to order the mayor and sheriffs of London to protect Roger Owery and John Want, to whom he had committed the custody of a certain Egyptian beast called an 'Oure,' various persons, who apparently wished to see the beast without paying, having threatened to assault them and kill the 'Oure.' What this creature was is not clear; possibly it was the aurochs or buffalo—Borde's

'vengeable beast,' the Bovy of Bohemia. Whatever it was its keepers, who had no doubt looked forward to making a good thing out of exhibiting it, seem to have had a doubtful bargain, and the same fate befell Thomas Charles, 'squier,' and William Lynde just about a century later when they obtained from the king the keeping of his 'foul called an Estrich.' They sent the ostrich round the country in charge of Richard Axsmith and John Piers, 'for to disporte with the sight of hym the kynges true lieges,'—and incidentally, though they do not think that worth mentioning, to put money in their own pockets. 'How be hit that oother mysdoers in certain places wher lite reverence is doon or shewed to anything of the kinges, as the dede hathe proven, have withoute cause wrongfully doon grete trespasses and offenses as wel to the said foul as to Richard Axsmyth and John Piers.' At Royston a mob, egged on by the prior, assaulted the keepers and caused the ostrich 'to ben seyn of alle peuple' and the unfor-

'The unfortunate "fowle" was "hurten so sore."'

tunate 'fowle' was 'hurten so sore that he may never be hool, as hit on hym wel appereth.' When they came to Norwich one of the sheriffs cast them into prison as 'false Flemings,' and 'caused the foul to be seyn in the common strete of alle peuple that list to come seen hym for nought.' Nor did they have any better luck at the next town, Bury St. Edmunds, where they were again imprisoned and the bird exhibited for nothing, the townsmen 'axing hem who made hem so hardy as to go on with the kinges foule about among his peuple without a commission.' This seems to have been the end of their tour in the eastern counties.

The ostrich does not often occur under that name, but its egg was often made into a cup, under the name of a griffon's egg or 'grype's ey.' Edward III. had more than one 'oef de greffon,' and Henry IV. had half-a-dozen 'gryppesheys,' but possibly by this time the term was only conventional and the true origin of the egg was known, as one of these

'gryppesheys' was mounted on 'two white ostriches.' The griffin, half eagle and half lion, was a very popular mediæval beast; that no specimen is ever recorded to have been taken round on show may have been due to the fact that this beast 'so much disdaineth vassalrey and subjection that he will never be surprised alive.' The appearance amongst the jewels of Richard II. of an almsdish supported by two griffons suggests an analogy with its modern relation the Jubjub, of which it is said that 'In charity meetings it stands at the door, And collects though it does not subscribe.' If doubt is to be thrown on examples of the griffon's eggs, still more dubitable is the 'drinking vessel made of the horn of a griffon, mounted in copper gilt,' which belonged to Edward III. This may well rank with a relic preserved in the Cathedral Priory of Rochester, —'the rod of Moses which budded,'—in view of the fact that it was Aaron's rod which budded and that a griffon has no horns.

If our forefathers never had a chance of

seeing a griffon and failed to appreciate an ostrich when they did see one, there is no question that they saw and appreciated the first elephant that landed in England. It was a present from King Louis of France to Henry III. and landed at Sandwich in 1255, whence it proceeded leisurely to London, filling all beholders with astonishment. It only lived a couple of years, and when its successor came over I do not know, but I suspect that there was a very long interval before England was again visited by an elephant. Before its lamented decease it sat for its portrait to Matthew Paris and another contemporary chronicler, and the resulting sketches are quite recognisable. The elephant was not a very favourite subject with mediæval artists, though the Earl of Arundel in 1397 had a piece of tapestry (probably oriental) 'powdered with lions, olyfauntes and imagery,' and if any one wants to know what it was like they have only to go to an old house in Market Street at Rye, where they can see just such a piece of

tapestry, 'olyfauntes' and all, reproduced as a wall-painting. Talking of elephants, a learned man not many years back wrote an article with the fascinating title, 'How the Elephant became a Bishop'; as a matter of fact it dealt with the evolution of the chess 'bishop,' but what a title for a fairy tale!

Elephants, to one mediævally minded, infallibly suggest dragons, for it it is notorious that there was bitter enmity between elephants and dragons. And the subject of dragons is a wide one. So far as I know the last, in Western Europe at least, was killed in the Roman Campagna in 1660, its slayer himself dying from the poison in its breath, but it was less than half a century before that, in 1614 to be precise, that a young half-fledged dragon—it was nine feet long and its wings were only just sprouting—was seen in Sussex, at Faygate in St. Leonards Forest. Of course in earlier times they were much more numerous; Switzerland swarmed with them, in fact Lucerne seems to have been almost as much the

happy hunting-ground of the dragon and the cockatrice as it is now of the Cook's tourist. The northern counties, especially Durham and Northumberland, were also much pestered by 'laidly worms'; two estates were held of the Bishop of Durham from early time by exhibiting to him annually the swords with which redoubtable ancestors of the tenants had slain the Worm of Sockburn and the fearsome Brawn of Brancepeth, a boar to which all ordinary boars were but as ordinary cattle to the Dun Cow, slain by Guy of Warwick with a sword still shown at Warwick Castle. Perhaps the most satisfactory dragon on record was that slain at Rhodes in 1345 by Deodatus de Gonzago. That wily and prudent knight constructed a pantomine dragon on the pattern of the real article and made two of his servants get inside and work it realistically; in this manner he accustomed his horse and his dogs to dragon-baiting, and his trouble was rewarded by the death of the monster and his own election to the mastership of the Knights of St. John.

Another famous dragon was the Tarask. It seems that when St. Mary Magdalene landed at Marseilles she installed herself in a dragon's

'. . . *constructed a pantomime dragon on the pattern of the real article.*'

cave; the dragon was unceremoniously ejected and went off higher up the Rhone; but he had no luck; the first person he met on landing was St. Martha, who gave him a good dressing

down and handed him over to the peasants, who slew him but immortalised his name in Tarascon. There were a great many varieties of dragons, but I think the most curious that I have met was one of silver gilt belonging to Henry IV. which was described as 'au guyse d'un boterflie'; anything less like a dragon than a butterfly it would be difficult to imagine. At the same time some of these terrible beasts seem to have been quite insignificant. The amphisbæna, though it developed in the Bestiaries into a fearsome dragon with a head at each end, started as quite a small worm, so small indeed that a whole one could be carried on the person without inconvenience. So carried it prevented the wearer from ever feeling chilly; in which respect it would seem to have been the opposite of the salamander, whose flesh was so cold that it quenched fire. Henry V. bought a parrot, two monkeys, and three salamanders from a fishmonger. I wonder what the salamanders were; if they were the squabby and unattractive lizard, black, with

yellow spots, which now goes by that name I fear the king must have been disappointed. If he experimented upon their alleged ability to live in fire, or at least to extinguish it, I fear the disappointment would have been shared by the salamanders.

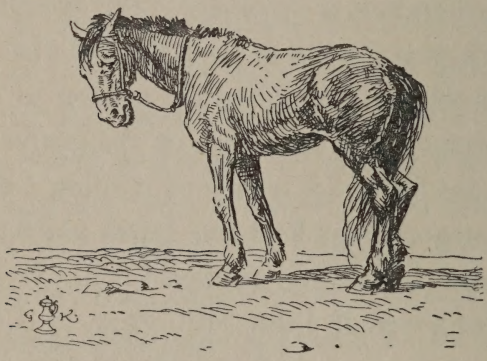
Besides the monsters of the land and air there were, of course, mediæval varieties of the sea-serpent. Matthew Paris records that in 1255 a monster bigger than the biggest whale was thrown up on the coast of Norfolk. As this was the year in which the first elephant came over I almost wondered if two had started and one had fallen overboard and been drowned, but quite by accident I came upon a legal case connected with this very sea monster, arising out of foreshore rights and rights of wreck, which showed that the creature, whatever it was, was very much alive when first seen, as no less than six boats were sunk in effecting its capture. Unfortunately no description of the monster is given, but probably it was a great sperm whale. Fifteen years earlier, in 1240,

according to the same chronicler, there was a great battle of whales off the mouth of the Thames, and one of the wounded came up the river, just managed to squeeze through the arches of London Bridge and got as far as Mortlake before it was killed. A fresh-water monster, or at least one which started life in a river and developed in a well but afterwards took to the land, was the terrible Lambton worm, which seems after all to have been more of a nuisance than a danger, as, so long as it got its trough full of milk regularly, it was content to lie about, coiled round Lambton Hill.

Terrible beasts were the basilisk—for which I have always felt an affection since I saw his portrait by Carpaccio in the church of St. George of the Sclavs (after much furious argument with a gondolier who knew no St. George but S. Giorgio Maggiore) at Venice—the cockatrice, and that strange hybrid of the two, the basilcok, known chiefly for its mean and unrelenting enmity to the centichore or yale, the strange pig-antelope who now sits once more

as he sat of yore on the bridge at Hampton Court. Terrible beasts all; but none so morally destructive as that noble friend of man, the horse. Everybody knows the famous derivation of hypocrite, 'from two Greek words—hippos, a horse, and krites, a judge: a horse-dealer, therefore, a deceiver.' The Archbishop of York would seem to have been of the same opinion when he inhibited the cellarer of Newburg from dealing in horses, on the ground that it was not fitting for a man of religion, because in the negotiations between buyer and seller it is almost impossible to avoid sin. It would have been well if John Hill, vicar of Coliton in Devon in 1426, had considered this before he sold a horse to Walter Trouns, 'knowing the horse to have contracted divers diseases and to be incapable of working.' From the description the horse would seem to have been of the same breed as the 'hakeney' hired by William Driffeld from Thomas Plevener, a London innkeeper, who 'promysed and warantized the said hakeney to be of helth and

of habilitie and well and trewlay' to carry Master William to Walsingham, whither he was going, no doubt, on pilgrimage. In spite of the warranty, the hackney, before he had covered twenty miles, 'wold nor myght go no ferther' and had to be left at Ware, where he



'*Hakeney.*'

died 'of dyverse infyrmytes.' Richard Chapman had a similar experience when he hired a horse from Christopher Thomas to carry him to York; at the end of the first day it 'failed hym and was morefounded.' Probably the hirers out of the horses threw the blame on their clients, as did Robert Grene, 'corsour' (*i.e.*

horse-dealer, not to be confused with corsair, a pirate), who, having sold a horse to John Bonauntre, complained that 'the said John rode upon the said hors' with the result that it was 'perished and utterly destroyed,' though whether that was due to the delicacy of the horse, which was only intended for ornament, or to the 'unresonable and outrajus rydyng' of the purchaser is not clear. Mules, as we might expect, occasionally gave as much trouble as horses. There was a Welsh clergyman in the fifteenth century, John Yevan by name, upon whom a brother clerk, John Grigge, managed to plant a mule 'the whiche he wold not have had, but through the gret labour and desyre of the said Sir John Grigge he toke the same mule upon his warantie that he shuld bere hym from Rome to London, orells not to paye therefore.' Exactly what happened on that journey is not revealed, but the mule would seem to have proved several degree more aggravating than Modestine in the Cevennes, for John Yevan 'was fayne and glad to make a

cambicion (exchange) by the waye, to his gret hurte and hynderance,' and felt much injured at being called upon to account for the missing mule on his return. The good man's knowledge of legal jargon seems to have been oral rather than literary, as he invoked the magic of the law by demanding a 'wryte of sorserare,' in which it is not easy to recognise a writ of *certiorari*.

One of the most deadly of vicarious insults was to crop the tails of your adversary's horses; it would seem to have been as bad as the biblical custom of cutting off the skirts of his messengers. John Enot, archdeacon of Buckingham in the fifteenth century, complained tearfully that one Thomas Coneloye (was he a lawless Irish Connelly?) prevented him from carrying out his duties in the punishment of sinners and had caused the tails of his horses to be cut. It was a similar insult to the hot-tempered Thomas Becket that caused that archbishop's furious denunciation of his enemies and led to his murder and so to his

canonisation, from which it follows that we owe Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to the curtailment of the archbishop's horses. From insult to assault is a short journey, and horses have brought so many to the 'demnition bow-wows,' that I am reminded at this point of the adventure of the vicar and the dog and the door-key, which fell out in this wise. William Russell, vicar of Mere in Somerset, some time during the reign of Henry VI., left his church at five o'clock one Good Friday evening, having been 'bysyly occupyed all that day before in hyryng of confessions.' He locked up his church and turned homewards, but on his way met one of his parishioners, John Totyn, an evil man, 'not dredyng God ne the censers of the chirche.' Totyn had in his hand a seven-foot staff with 'a grete pyke of yren' at one end and with him was 'an horryble grete Dogge called a lymer,' and he at once attacked the vicar and 'provoked and stered his saide dogge to renne upon hym, callyng hym by his name and saide Hay Dewgarde.' I am not

clear whether the dog's name was Dieugarde, which seems rather unlikely, or Dugald, which is possible, but I rather incline to the idea that Totyn really said 'good dog,' with a provincial

'. . . *showed him his injuries.*'

accent—'Hey! gude darg!' in fact. Anyhow, 'the saide dogge, knowyng the condicions of his maister, ran upon (the vicar) and bote hym by the arme in iij places and pullyd hym downe to grounde twyes and so was likely then to have been murthored by the saide

John Totyn and his dogge,'—the good vicar at the recollection of the exciting incident becomes oblivious of grammar and changes the subject of his verbs—'but as God woold he smote the said dogge with the chirche dore key under his ere, and with that the said dogge departed.' Next day worthy William Russell trotted off to his patron, the Abbot of Glastonbury, and showed him his injuries—'his shurte beyng full of blode, his gowne to torne, his arme sore byten'; but he got cold comfort and scant sympathy. Totyn was the abbot's servant and the abbot said, 'that that was doon it was doon in the defence of my man, and it shall coste me xl^{li} or thou shalte do my man any wrong, for I lete the wete I wyll defende hym.'

Dogs of all kinds,—

> 'Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
> Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
> Or bobtail tike or trundle tail,'

figure often enough in our old records, and often enough got their owners into trouble for

poaching, but they were not so frequently complained of for assault as might have been expected. I remember coming across one rather interesting case in which a man complained that a neighbour's dogs had chased a tame deer belonging to his daughter, and when she interfered to rescue it had bitten her hands. The keeping of tame deer was common enough; Edward III. had a tame hind brought from St. Albans to Woodstock on one occasion, and about a couple of centuries later a Lincolnshire clergyman, John Barnardiston, rector of Great Coates, for his own recreation and comfort and the amusement of his friends, 'noryshed, kept and brought up a tame hynde calfe.' Unfortunately he had annoyed Sir Christopher Askew, who instigated William Morecropp and other 'lyght and evyll disposed persons' to kill the hind. They discovered where it frequented day and night and carried it off to Morecropp's house, where they assembled next day 'with force and aryms; that is to saye wyth staves, bylles, swordes and

bokelers,'—an almost excessive armament for the purpose,—and slew the unfortunate hind and carried its body to Sir Christopher, who, when Barnardiston complained, 'lyghtly and

'. . . *fully armed with swords and bucklers.*'

wantonly made a gret game and sport therat' and threatened that worse should befall him if he did not sit still. While sympathising with the rector for the loss of his pet, it is difficult to deny that the assembly of half-a-dozen

ruffians fully armed with swords and bucklers to tackle one tame little fawn suggests the four-and-twenty tailors who set out to kill a snail, and is not without its ludicrous side.

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